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HUMAN

DEVELOPMENT

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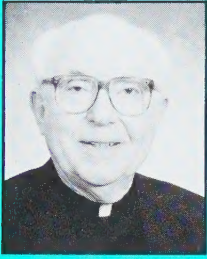
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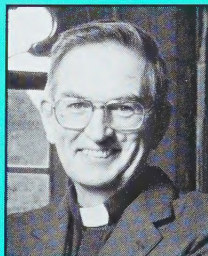
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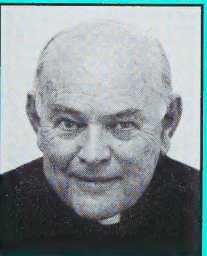
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Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide author name(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

Book reviews, which should not exceed 600 words in length, should be sent to the Book Review Editor, Jon O'Brien, S.J., D.O., c/o HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (for address, see above).

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EDITOR'S PAGE

SEXUALITY INSTITUTE EXPANDING STEADILY

Several readers of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT have recently told us that they find our frequent announcements about the Christian Institute for the Study of Human Sexuality interesting and attractive, but they think we should also provide our subscribers with an occasional update on the progress of the program. I welcome their invitation to comment on how far we have come since the Spring 1993 issue, when we proposed the establishment of an institute that would help to "adequately prepare all the men and women who work as seminary and religious formators so that they could talk comfortably, maturely, and helpfully about sex and sexuality with those entrusted to their care."

Our dream was to found an educational center to which men and women entering or already involved in the ministry of formation could come for a month or more to learn or review the essential elements of biology, psychology, spirituality, morality, and counseling connected with sexuality, so that their work of training others for celibate life and ministry could be successfully accomplished. We intended to situate the program on the campus of a Jesuit university, but at the time we were unable to find one with available residential accommodations. Then, thanks to the generosity of Bernard Cardinal Law, we were invited to occupy space at Boston's archdiocesan seminary for two years, until we found the more suitable location in Silver Spring, Maryland, where we are now. The Institute has been in operation for nearly four years, and we have graduated 278 students who came from seminaries, religious congregations, and dioceses all over the world to upgrade their knowledge and counseling skills related to sexuality.

We opened the doors of the Institute at a time when the church in the United States had already

begun to reel from the shock of seeing publicly exposed in the press and on television hundreds of cases of sexual abuse perpetrated by members of the ordained clergy. Our hope has been to contribute to the prevention of further sexual misbehavior by teaching our students to recognize signs of immaturity and psychopathology that could signal which candidates for admission to seminaries and novitiates should be screened out or sent for professional treatment. But even more important, we believe, is the need to teach formation personnel the elements of theory and practice essential to helping all seminarians and religious men and women to attain full, normal, and healthy psychosexual and social maturity for their own sake and for the sake of their future effectiveness in ministry.

We gradually began to recognize that many of the women and men electing to participate in the Institute's program were coming to us in roles other than that of formation director. We were attracting spiritual directors, campus ministers, pastors, youth counselors, vocation directors, and laypeople as well as clergy and religious. Thus far, students have come to us from forty-four different countries, and most have told us that the favorable word-of-mouth publicity provided by our graduates was what attracted them, rather than our advertisements in such Catholic publications as *America*, the *Tablet*, the *National Catholic Reporter*, and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

The content of the Institute's program has evolved to the extent that we now have five seminar sessions every week, and each student meets with his or her personal tutor at least twice weekly. The seminars focus on spirituality and sexuality, psychology and sexuality, morality and sexuality, biology and sexuality, and communication about sexual issues and behavior. We are blessed with a faculty of eighteen experts in these areas. The latest addition to our faculty and administrative team is Sister Lynn M. Levo, C.S.J., Ph.D., who was for many years a staff psychologist at the Consultation Center in Albany,

New York, and more recently was the congregational director on the congregational leadership team of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet. In addition to her role as a director of the Institute, Sister Levo is a seminar leader and tutor in our four-week academic program, as well as a provider of educational consultations throughout the United States and abroad.

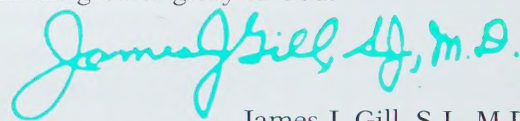
Our expanding library, which includes thousands of the latest and best books, videotapes, and audiocassettes on various aspects of human sexuality, is a rich and central resource, giving our students a chance to pursue independent study along the pathways their personal ministry requires. Our tutors assist them, as guides and counselors, as they deepen their understanding of sexuality and of themselves. And, not surprisingly, the students' relationships and interactions with others from cultures all around the world give them a rich experience of companionship and community support.

Many of those who spend a month or more studying with us have designed their stay as a major component of a sabbatical or renewal experience. In addition to the academic work they do at their own pace, most find ample time to take advantage of the exceptional historical, cultural, and entertainment resources so abundant in the Silver Spring-Washington, D.C. area.

My deepest hope for the future is that the day will soon come when bishops, seminary rectors, and religious superiors will perceive the benefit of sending

into our unique program the key persons in formation work and spiritual direction ministry who can help prevent sexual abuses as well as foster the full Christian maturity—especially its psychosexual and social aspects—of those whom God entrusts to their care. The cost of participating in the Institute is infinitely less than the amount of money that dioceses and religious congregations are now being forced to pay into legal settlements and psychiatric treatment for clergy and religious offenders and their victims.

In the next issue of *HUMAN DEVELOPMENT* we intend to publish an article on some of the things we have learned about human sexuality as a result of our educational work with our students. For now, I hope this brief report gives our readers a fairly clear impression of the progress we are making with the Institute. We ask that you pray for the success of this important enterprise, and that you make it known to those who you think might benefit from studying with us. If you know a Catholic philanthropist or someone on the board of a charitable foundation, please tell him or her that we are in need of financial help to keep expanding our offerings in order to do all we can for the church, the world, and the greater glory of God.



James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.
Editor-in-Chief

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*For information about the Institute and program,
please see the back cover of this issue.*

Leadership or Incumbency?

George Wilson, S.J.

The news account was straightforward enough: "The Fathers of Holy Joy announced yesterday that their chapter had elected Father Henry Thornton as provincial. The new leader had been the director of formation for the mid-Atlantic province of the congregation. . . ."

What's wrong with this picture? Certainly nothing about the Fathers of Holy Joy. They are known for their commitment to a charism that is sorely needed and deeply appreciated by those they serve in the contemporary church. And nobody could quibble with the choice of good Father Henry—a man of solid virtue and vision, with a good record of administrative achievement, and jolly to the core.

Nor should we be distracted by the fact that the Fathers of Holy Joy are a body of male clerics who are tooting their own horn and claiming valuable space in the local diocesan newspaper. The account could just as easily have been about the choice of Sister Eileen Thornton as provincial superior of the Sisters of Holy Joy. What's wrong with the article is not a male thing, much less a clerical thing.

In the culture of the Holy Joy group, the chapter body rather than the membership selects the provincial—but surely there can be nothing wrong with that. Some religious communities do indeed elect by universal suffrage: one member, one vote. In other groups, the chapter proposes a terna of nominees, and the supreme moderator selects from among

them; in still others, there is direct appointment of the provincial, with no voting at all. These are matters of the heritage and culture of the particular community; each system has its strengths and drawbacks. Each method is recognized as valid for that group (and, if the truth be known, the track record for each, as measured by the numbers of stars or clinkers actually selected, varies little). As that wise man Mahatma Gandhi cautioned years ago, structure by itself produces neither character nor quality.

Finally, the problem with the report about Father Thornton has no intrinsic connection to religious life—or even to the church, for that matter. Father Thornton became provincial; the story might just as well have been about his brother Tom Thornton, a layman, being named chief executive officer of the Acme Wire Corporation.

No, the bug in the (holy) oil is something much less obtrusive: the use of the word *leader*. Father Thornton's election did indeed make him provincial. But did it make him the province's leader? In a word, no.

TWO DIFFERENT REALITIES

The wording in the newspaper article is quite common in such accounts. In fact, it is so widely accepted that we easily miss the point that such usage masks a serious confusion. The article declares that with his election, Father Thornton is the leader of the

province—whereas experience tells us that he might *become* their leader, provided that some other things happen. This disconnect can lead us to put the issue in the form of a paradoxical question: When is a “leader” not a leader?

The clue to resolution of the paradox is that a single word is often used to point to two quite different realities. The first reality is that someone, whether by election or by appointment, has become provincial (or chief executive officer, or director, or headmaster, or whatever). The person has assumed a position or taken office. To begin to clean up the confusion, we will remove the word *leader* from this reality and refer to the individual as the *incumbent*.

The first thing to note about incumbency is that it admits of no gradation or change; you either do have the position or hold the office, or you don't. And once you do, you do until you don't; you're in until you're out.

Incumbency is a static concept. The underlying image, remember, is actually that of someone lying prone. As an incumbent, you hold an office or a position. That delightfully crusty character Richard Cardinal Cushing captured the notion perfectly. At age 75 he had turned in his resignation, as required by church law, and was awaiting the appointment of a successor. Someone told him that Father So-and-So had his eye on the seat, whereupon Cushing growled, “He may have his eye on it, but I've got me ass on it.”

The second reality is leadership, and that is quite another matter. Leadership, by contrast to incumbency, is essentially dynamic. You are a leader only when there is leading going on, when others are following. That's why it is possible to say that Father Thornton is the provincial and to say simultaneously that he might become the leader. He is the incumbent, but whether he becomes the leader depends on others' acceptance of his leadership. This difference is the reality behind the political pundits' assessments of our president's current political reality: Mr. Clinton might salvage his position as president, but whether he can still lead depends on who will listen to him. His position may or may not be in jeopardy, but even if it is not, his potential to lead may be damaged, if not reduced to nil.

So incumbency, the holding of an office or position, is inert—a given. It is a reality that prevails regardless of any actions taken either by the incumbent or by those affected by the office or position. The presence or absence of leadership, on the other hand, depends on actions taken by both the leader and those who are, for the moment, following.

Now that we have pulled apart the link that is frequently assumed between incumbency and lead-

ership, it is not hard to discover that four distinct possible permutations have surfaced. There can be incumbents who are not leaders; incumbents who are also leaders; leaders who are not incumbents but rather ordinary members; and members who neither are incumbents nor exert any leadership or active influence on the life of the group. With these possibilities outlined, let us explore the dynamic reality we call leadership. Our primary concern will be leadership as it relates to office holders; the same principles apply, however, to ordinary members as potential leaders within the group.

LEADERS CONCERNED WITH WHOLE

If leadership is dynamic, it is also essentially relational. You can't lead if you are all alone. Some incumbents never seem to learn this elemental fact. They stand in splendid isolation, proclaiming their leadership by issuing lofty manifestos, while their members are off on another planet—performing quite well, thank you.

Which raises the next question: if the leader (or leadership body, taken as a unit) is one partner to the relationship, who is the other? From the way some incumbents carry out their office, it is clear that in their eyes, the other party is all the members of the group, one by one. They see themselves as being responsible to care for the individual members of the community as individuals, prescinding from their relationship to the community as a whole. That is indeed one possible focus of attention for an office holder, and its exercise calls for many wonderful human gifts: sensitivity, caring, empathy, and supportive confrontation, to name but a few.

But there is another reality that somebody in the gathered body—if not the incumbent, then someone else—must attend to: the development and health of the group as such. That is a reality of a different order, concerned with things like corporate identity, vision, mission, strategy, policy, and structuring. Such things are not attended to when the office holder's energies are employed in dealing with individuals in isolation. To put the matter baldly: It is possible to have a 100-person collective in which each individual, as a result of care on the part of incumbents, is reasonably content, while the enterprise as a whole is treading water on its way to the falls.

Once again, it won't do to have the same word designating these two realities. They are two different uses of human energies, and to avoid confusion we need separate terms for each.

At Management Design Institute, where I have hung my hat for a long time, we have always taught that the term that describes attention to the group as

a whole rather than to the separate individuals within it is *leadership*. So what term shall we use for the attention an incumbent gives to the individual members, if that is not to be called leadership?

At some risk, I would propose that we call that kind of engagement simply *ministry*. In its behavioral manifestation it is the same thing, after all, that any ordinary member might show to another individual member: listening, affirming, supporting, reflecting back, alleviating pain, celebrating growth, challenging to authenticity.

I once knew a man who was a superb minister in his role as pastor of a parish: caring for all the wounded in the community, sensitive and empathetic. He never missed visiting a parishioner in the hospital or someone grieving a loss, and he was able to join in people's joys and celebrations just as well. When he became a bishop and had the responsibility for a diocese, he wanted to continue in that same fashion, the only difference being that now he had thousands more to attend to—individual by individual. It took some time for his staff to bring home to him that he had to let others do the one-on-one stuff and focus his energies on the fabric of the local church as a whole.

WHY NOT "MINISTRY OF LEADERSHIP"?

The usage I am proposing might help us unravel another semantic tangle that has become prevalent in the postconciliar years. It surfaces in the expression "ministry of leadership."

When we remind ourselves that this terminology was unheard of until after Vatican II, the sentiments that gave rise to the expression become clear enough. They were quite laudable. We wanted to move away from previous models of (nonleading) office holding that were often simply autocratic and oppressive. We needed language that would put a human, Christ-like face on things like offices and the authority that comes with them. What could have been a better union than the marriage of that most Christian term for service, *ministry*, with that expression of optimistic American can-do-ism, *leadership*? The effort was praiseworthy—but it is not so clear that it has served us very well.

The first difficulty with the expression "ministry of leadership" is that, because of its positive affective resonances, it is easily equated with an attitude on the part of the incumbent. Much of the literature on leadership as service focuses on the set of qualities the office holder needs to exemplify—including modesty, gentleness, empathy for those hurting, willingness to be vulnerable, and ability to admit mistakes. The accent on the personal qualities of the

incumbent and of the persons he or she serves can be so strong that things like organizational attention and ability to care for the whole are overlooked. The point was made to me by a layman who had spent many years as an accomplished professional in the field of management. In his retirement years he volunteered his services in diocesan projects. He remarked to me, with a bit of sadness, "Since I started working with church people, I've begun to observe something that disturbs me. They don't seem to be able to make the tough decisions, do they?" Leading involves more than warm attitudes; it requires analysis and the taking of stands that carry the risk of alienating those one is called to lead.

Much of today's religious writing could give one the impression that calculating consequences is a bad thing. Listen carefully and you may hear a disgruntled member say something like, "Well, the council just looked at the benefits and risks and took the easy course; there was no attention to the gospel." Such critics gloss over the fact that the grumbler was doing his own calculating but just happened to weight the benefits and risks differently than those bearing the responsibility for the decisions. As with other matters, here too we pick and choose our image of Jesus, and among all the possible choices, the uncalculating Good Shepherd who leaves the rest of the sheep to go after the stray dominates the stage. The "other" Jesus—the one who asks "What king, if he were going out to fight a battle, would not first sit down and see if he has the forces?"—is lost among the stagehands and extras. And the Jesus who (after clearly calculating the consequences) scared the wits out of his followers by going into the sacred precincts of the temple and tossing the furniture around doesn't even get a casting call.

Another potential risk lies in the expression "servant leadership." What that really means, in action, depends on one's deeper image of servanthood. For any Christian, *servant* and *service* are seductively lovely words, easy to use and therefore dangerous. We may think that if we say them, we must already understand what they entail.

The way some people use the word *servant*, it describes a one-way street: the servant is always giving. That, of course, makes the other person always a recipient. Such servants may give the receivers faces and thus personalize or even romanticize them, but it's still clear who is the giver and who isn't. It's the way benevolent but misguided people often treat the poor, thus inflicting on them once again the deepest pain of their poverty: the sense that they have nothing to give. It's a subtle form of colonialism, really. Unfortunately, it is not all that difficult to transform "servant leadership" into an ideology of "service,"

and religious leaders who glibly invoke the mantra that they have come only to serve may actually be disempowering their members, who may themselves be only too willing to be accomplices in the process. Despite the rhetoric, moralizing is neither servanthood nor leadership.

All in all, then, it would appear better to keep the language of ministry and service at arm's length while we first focus on the systemic aspect of leadership. When that framework is clearly in place, we can paint in the personal qualities and skills it takes to lead a body of free persons—agents, not recipients.

LEADERSHIP EARNED AND CONFERRED

Leadership, the act of leading, is dynamic. It occurs in the doing, not in the talking about it. It is also relational: other people are integral to its exercise. Finally, it is systemic: the relationship of the leader is to the entire organism or enterprise, not to the individual persons directly. And incumbency doesn't guarantee its presence; in fact, some of the members of the group may be leading it without even holding office. So where does leadership come from? How is it conceived and birthed?

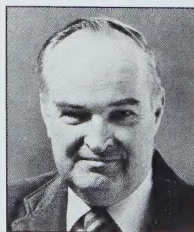
The ability to lead a body of people, because it is essentially relational, involves mutual cooperation in its genesis. From the side of the one becoming a leader (whether an incumbent or not), it has to be earned through actions that foster in the body the capacity to trust the leader. From the side of the group, it is conferred on the leader by the membership as an expression of the trust that has been generated in the body through those same actions. This analysis might seem to stumble in the case of elected incumbents. By the very fact that they are not appointed but elected, hasn't the body of electors already expressed its trust and thereby conferred leadership upon the chosen incumbent?

Would that it were so. The reality, however, is that many groups propose and then elect people to office who they know will not lead them but will rather exercise the office in such a way that the members can continue to tread water, perhaps with a new set of water wings to lessen the strain of the treading. In fact, it can happen that the group will elect someone and simultaneously ensure that he or she can't lead—whether that is done by also electing a council that will stymie any leadership initiative or by finding ways of resisting actively every time the incumbent tries to exercise the mandate that appeared to come with the election. This may all happen at the pre-conscious level of the group psyche, but it happens. Passive aggression is not unique to individuals; whole systems practice it.

The fact that the power to lead must be freely conferred but also depends on a continuing, dynamic relationship means that it can wane or even be lost as a result of subsequent choices by the leader. Gaining or maintaining leadership is a function of trust, the growth of which depends on performance demonstrating that its conferral was warranted. Unfortunately, the offer of trust, and therefore leadership, is often squandered by subsequent actions that contradict the nature of the relationship the members thought they enjoyed. I heard recently about a newly appointed bishop who has a body of supporters ready to let him lead. They want to confer leadership on him. Unfortunately, some of his earliest actions were so self-centered that a key staff member has remarked, "He just continues to lose all his leadership credits with his priests."

It would take us far beyond the scope of this article to lay out all the steps and stages by which a body of people gradually chooses to give someone the power to lead, but even here it is possible to name the bedrock on which the leadership relationship is based. Members will trust, and therefore confer leadership upon, persons in their midst (incumbents or not) who demonstrate that they respect and will foster the unique identity and spirit, the gifts and purposes, of that particular body of people.

In the case of the Fathers of Holy Joy, that is not a question of some generic religious life. That is a useless, perhaps toxic abstraction. Annie Dillard makes the sage comment, "I have never seen a tree that wasn't this particular tree"; the same holds true for instances of religious life. We're talking incarnation here. For the Fathers of Holy Joy, that involves elbows and bunions, empty nets and staggering catches, spiny villains, incorrigible characters, and frightfully holy nonentities. The Fathers of Holy Joy—for all their warts and failings, conflicting desires and incompatible expectations of leaders, passive aggression and active shallowness—are an irreducibly unique creation of God's grace. Good Father Henry had better believe that and remove his sandals before assuming office. With bare feet and some organizational smarts, he just might make it. They could entrust to him the incomparable gift of letting him lead them. And that's true for his brother Tom at Acme Wire, too.



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Conflict Resolution Among Clergy

Reverend William F. Murphy

The possibility that pastors would cause difficulties for their young parochial vicars did not occur to me until seminary classmates began to complain about the ordeals they endured. The men they described were persons whose values, sensitivities, and goals were foreign. One pastor reportedly had removed the doors from the rooms in the living quarters to foster a sense of community. Another delighted in his own dinner-table flatulence. Such extremes aside, several men reported pastors who did not consider the needs or commitments of their associates when planning a presiding or duty schedule. Poor performance by rectory staff was tolerated without criticism, and the separation of work and living spaces was informal at best.

Situated in a place I liked with agreeable confreres, I could only roll my eyes and share my friends' righteous indignation at this terrible state of affairs. How could the archdiocese permit this to continue? How could young men be placed with these cretins, when the resulting discouragement would surely damage the foundation the seminary had established?

Several years later, I found myself appointed to the clergy personnel office. There I began to hear the pastors of newly ordained priests voice *their* dismay at the quality of young clerics. The pastors felt that these men were overly concerned with their own

self-fulfillment. I heard complaints about self-centered, irresponsible young priests whose work was balanced with recreation to the perceived detriment of the parish. The young priests had active social lives and a commitment to self-care; missing was a willingness to be present and available in the rectory when so assigned. The needs of the parish seemed to come last. I heard pastors question the program of seminary formation.

Still later I got a chance to view this dynamic at close range. I found myself in a position to meet with priests whose working and living relationships had deteriorated. I listened to priests who could not get along with each other. I recommended courses of action to my superiors. Often I felt frustrated by an inability to bring reconciliation and understanding when hostilities had flared. The task of bringing the priests together was left largely to the men themselves, with outside assistance from a regional vicar. Deeper sources of conflict were assigned to personal psychotherapists. The ordinary course was to seek relief by ending the working relationship. Hence, much was left unresolved.

This article sketches out a plan for addressing interpersonal or working conflicts within rectory settings. Often, tension within rectories is seen as an annoying and difficult side issue that distracts from the

work of the priests. To adequately resolve such tension, priests need to recognize that their relationships are important to the functioning of the parish community. They need to spend time untangling the roots of problems and establishing methods of preventing their recurrence. The experience of reconciliation will add energy to their ministry and provide them with a living and personal example of the love they preach. As stated in a 1977 document from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, entitled *As One Who Serves: Reflections on the Pastoral Ministry of Priests*, "the quality of life and relationships in the rectory can be a valuable source of personal growth, encouragement in Christ and a more effective ministry. It speaks to the priests' credibility as witnesses to the Lord when they labor to form a loving and supportive community in the rectory. It is a primary task of priests working and living together to announce to the people by their lives that community is possible."

PRIESTS ARE DIFFERENT

In summing up the experience he gained through working with priests, someone described priests who repeatedly have interpersonal problems as "low-affect, big-ego" personalities. These priests generally have difficulty expressing emotion and tend to view their world through the prism of their own importance. People familiar with priests nod vigorously when I share this insight with them. To label all priests with such a broad brush is imprecise, but the fundamental insight comes from lived therapeutic experience.

Problems between priests often result from a perceived threat to their established expectations (big ego). This threat is poorly addressed, and what follow are half-buried resentments, passive-aggressive behaviors, or explosions of anger (low affect).

A particular feature of parish life is that the pastor and his parochial vicar are presumed to be companions in the house as well as in the vineyard. A stable working relationship can be based on familiar patterns found in many segments of society. The pastor is "the boss" and the parochial vicar is a coworker with fewer responsibilities. Unlike the majority of people in working relationships, though, these participants share the same living space and are expected at the same table. One or both may strain to alter the dynamic. The parochial vicar may decide to express himself through the utilization of what he considers to be his home; the pastor may attempt to structure the rectory along the lines of his personal desires. If the men do not communicate well, their various personal assertions will result in tension.

Living "above the store" provides additional opportunity for conflict to arise.

A hopeful dimension of priestly life rests in spirituality. While priests are often very different in the expressions of their ecclesial, liturgical, and devotional understandings, they are fundamentally dedicated to the Lord Jesus. This means that each priest has a foundation of belief that unites him to other priests and to principles of goodness, cooperation, and self-sacrifice. The faith he shares with his brother is a powerful tool in narrowing the divisions between them.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Who is best suited to manage the conflicts that arise between priests? Ultimately, the priests themselves must be willing and able to settle their own disputes. If they are in need of basic tools beyond those they already possess, they can be aided. Many helps exist for finding a path through emotions to sources of conflict and resolution. Put to use, these can help priests to sort out their differences and reach agreements. Sometimes one or both men embroiled in a conflict are either unwilling or incapable of laying aside its emotional aspects. They have taken it personally. In that case, it is helpful for another person to guide the men through their emotions and to sustain focus on the issues of substance. This third party might be a regional vicar, auxiliary bishop, or another person designated by the bishop. What matters is the skill of the mediator, not his or her position within the church.

SPIRITUAL TOOLS

To raise awareness of one another's humanity and shared mission, it is helpful for priests to pray with and for one another. Many rectories incorporate common prayer at a set time in the daily schedule, which gives priests the opportunity to be with one another before the Lord. This experience can help them see one another as brothers. It can allow them the quiet reflection that helps them place one another's faults in a larger perspective. It can reduce the tensions that egocentrism and perfectionism foster. Also, the renewed vision of a common work can deflate a sense of competition.

When tensions escalate, as they often will, a joint celebration of Eucharist may be helpful. Alone before the Lord with themselves and their vocations in the barest form, the brothers share the bread, blessed and broken. This suggestion may seem to spiritualize the real issues or be an attempt to minimize them in the light of devotional zeal. In fact, however, the joint

celebration of Eucharist can provide priests with an invaluable perspective. Here they are exposed to the unavoidable reality of suffering, in the sacrifice of Christ. Their Lord's suffering can help them place their own in perspective and see that the hurts they have suffered are not sufficient grounds for alienating another human being. They also come into the presence of God's reconciling grace and his promise to make all things new. For men who build their lives on spiritual principles, a humble encounter with that mystery can benefit their relationships.

It is also important for each priest to be in contact with a spiritual director or someone whose spiritual insights he values. A period of conflict is by nature upsetting. Questions of responsibility, identity, and role have deep roots. Impartial contributions sought from neutral parties can assist priests in venting, framing the conflict, and working out acceptable solutions.

The spiritual benefits sought from these suggested practices have no particularly appropriate insertion point. Strength ought to be sought and applied when needed. As a general rule, feelings of aggression should prompt men to seek help from outside the relationship. Feelings of anxiety or frustration should point them toward one another.

A SAMPLING OF SCENES

The pastor of Saint Thomas, Father Oliver S. Hughes, arrived back at the rectory tired from his days off. He'd spent most of the two days tending to the care of his elderly father. Father Hughes had been trying to keep his 87-year-old father in his own home, but the frequency of doctors' visits and minor crises pointed to the inevitability of a nursing home. Checking the bulletin board on the second-floor landing, Father Hughes discovered that he was scheduled for a funeral in the morning. The deceased was nobody he knew. He hoped his young parochial vicar, Father Ken DeWitt, had gleaned adequate information from the family for a homily. Father DeWitt had his mind on other things lately, though, hoping to be named a pastor before his tenth anniversary.

Father Hughes turned at the sound of light footsteps on the stairs from the third floor and saw a plump woman in her mid-forties descending. She was dressed in sweatpants and a sweatshirt. "Excuse me," she said. "Hi. Where can I find some soap? I forgot to ask Ken before he went to the wake, and I've looked all around."

Father Hughes felt his blood pressure rise. Over the next few minutes he learned that Luann Spek was a friend of Father DeWitt. They had met at a liturgy conference in Chicago the previous year. She was in

town for a visit, and Ken had invited her to stay for two nights in the suite on the unoccupied third floor. Gracious but still unsettled, Father Hughes found Luann a bar of soap, and she returned to the third floor. He was unpacking his overnight bag when the sound of water flowing through the pipes began. "He's not going to get away with this," he muttered.

Just then the front door closed. A moment later, Father DeWitt had bounded up the stairs and was tapping at the pastor's door. "Ollie?" he called.

The Pastor felt himself go red. He hated being called that.

The parochial vicar eased himself into the pastor's study, craning forward. Wordlessly, the pastor emerged from his bedroom.

"Ah, there you are," said Father DeWitt, holding the *Order for Christian Funerals* and smiling broadly. "Did you meet Luann?"

"Uh, yeah. Yup. She was looking for soap."

"I meant to say something before you left, but it slipped my mind. She's a friend, a wonderful woman. I trust it's okay. She's got incredible talent. I asked her to make sure to bring some of her poetry along. We're getting together over at the Groves's in a while. Want to come?"

"No, Ken, I'm pretty beat." Father Hughes inhaled deeply. "Ken . . . uh . . . What did you find out at the wake?"

"They said you buried his wife two years ago. Nice man. World War II—the Pacific. Loved his family. You know—three daughters, lots of grandchildren. One of the older ones wants to do a reading."

"Which one?"

"They said they'd call in the morning."

"Anything else?"

"No, not really."

"Okay, Ken," Father Hughes said, turning away and waving limply. "I'll see you tomorrow."

Walking over to the Groves's home, Ken and Luann chatted. The conversation turned to Father Hughes, and Ken took the opportunity to vent some of his frustrations. "He's a bump on a log. He's got some golf buddies, and I guess they have a good time together, but he must save his jollies for them. The house is like a mausoleum. I've tried to get him to fire the cook. Shoe leather and vegetable mush. It's awful. I hardly ever eat there any more. I've tried to have a couple of dinner parties, but he says he'd rather not. I think he resents the work I do with the kids, even though people are always telling him they love to see it. I'll have my own place soon, anyway—I hope."

Three days later, Father Hughes was finishing his lunch when Father DeWitt came into the dining room. "Ken, could you sit down?"

"Well, I was heading out to lunch with Stan."

"This will just take a minute." Father Hughes waited for Father DeWitt to seat himself and noticed a prickly feeling on the back of his neck. He rubbed it. "I've wanted to talk to you about your guest. I'd really rather you didn't ask people in."

"Luann?"

"Especially a woman, Ken. Only clergy are supposed to stay in rectories."

Ken felt his own voice gain heft. "What about John, last summer? Do seminarians count?"

"That's different."

"I don't see that it is. He's not ordained. If we can't have anyone but priests here, then we should stick with the rules."

"Ken, she's a woman."

"So?"

"So this isn't a hotel."

"The housekeeper used to live here, didn't she?"

"That was years ago. Look, Ken, I guess I'm not asking—I'm telling you. No guests who aren't priests."

"Ollie, it just doesn't make sense."

"I'm the pastor, Ken."

"Aren't we both grown men?"

"Are we clear?"

"You know, it's not that easy living here. It's like a dungeon. A little company wouldn't hurt from time to time. If you'd given her a chance, you would have liked her."

"Are we clear?"

Silence. Ken stood up from the table and left for his lunch appointment.

That was pretty much the last time Ken and Oliver talked, except for the exchange of important information. Much of that was done by notes left at one another's doors—or they would communicate through the secretary. Four months later, Ken was appointed a pastor. Oliver found an excuse not to attend the installation and the party. Ken didn't mind.

DEALING WITH CONFLICT

In her book *Resolving Conflict With Others and Within Yourself*, Gini Graham Scott identifies five major methods of handling conflict, first articulated by Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann in 1972 as the "Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument." The five modes are designated as competitive, avoidant, accommodative, compromising, and collaborative.

The competitive style is used by people intent on asserting a desired result on other parties. This is a useful method for those who possess the authority to force their will on others. It can be efficient if an impasse has made a resolution doubtful, if time is an issue, or if the matter is considered especially

important. Competitive decision makers may lose in popularity what they gain in results. One is reminded of General Alexander Haig's "I'm in charge!" declaration on the day President Ronald Reagan was shot. The gaffe was lampooned for months in a society with an established chain of command. One must choose the competitive style carefully and wisely, especially when parity and consultation are presumed to exist.

The avoidant style of conflict resolution places the issue to the side, to be handled later or ignored completely. If it is decided that the effort involved is not worth it, if addressing the issue would inflame the problem, if one does not feel that one can win, or if other reasons make action untimely, avoidance is a legitimate avenue. One must be careful to understand why avoidance is being chosen, though, because it can easily slip into passive aggression. The individual who is sure of defeat might well choose to express unhappiness in ways that continue to damage the relationship. Also, the perception of being ignored can further irritate the other party.

A third mode of resolving conflict is the accommodative. The similarity between this and the avoidant style is that both can be used as a delaying tactic. There is one major difference: in accommodating, a person willingly accedes to the wishes of another, even if it is felt that the chosen path is not the best one. One accommodates another when he or she doesn't feel as strongly about the issue as the other does and when it is important to maintain harmony, or when there is little chance of arguing for another course, or when it is felt that the choice of a poor path will teach the other an important lesson. To accommodate is to give lip service to another's idea or authority.

A compromising approach involves both parties meeting each other halfway. Here, the individuals are flexible, willing to give up part of what they desire in order to secure what is considered most important. "I can live with that" is the seal of approval on the compromise. Those who compromise are equal in power and seek mutually exclusive goals. Persons who work together are more likely to be satisfied with compromise than those whose relationship is deeper. In a working relationship, the desire is to see things done quickly and efficiently. The emotional underpinnings are less important than the product.

The most thorough approach to conflict resolution is collaborative. This method works at extracting the sources as well as the manifestations of the problem. It takes more time and energy than any of the other paths, and both parties must be at least nominally committed to it. The collaborative is the only true "win-win" model. Persons may enter this sort of

discussion with particular goals in mind, often leaving with goals changed, different-than-expected outcomes accepted, and a stronger relationship built. The collaborative model works best when the issue is important; when there is a close, continuing, or interdependent relationship; and when there is time and energy available to give to the issue.

BACK AT THE RECTORY

Father Hughes chose the competitive style. Because he had the power as pastor, he could opt to force his will upon Father DeWitt. Father Hughes wouldn't be popular, but he didn't seem to care. Already stressed by his father's illness, which he could not control, he decided to impose his wishes on the other priest, whom he could control at least superficially.

Once the matter had been raised, Father DeWitt made the choice to concede to the desire of Father Hughes. Scott notes that this is a legitimate option. According to the Killman Instrument, Father DeWitt adopted an accommodative style. Because he anticipated being named a pastor himself, he decided it was not worth standing up for his position. He also saw that he would most likely be unsuccessful in changing Father Hughes's attitude. Finally, he recognized that he did not have the ultimate power in the relationship. These factors contributed to his decision to accept the issue as Father Hughes saw it.

Unfortunately, while the issue was addressed no further, the emotions remained. Father DeWitt felt deprived of a reasonable use of the rectory. He also continued to feel oppressed by Father Hughes's authority and the depressive atmosphere of the rectory. He knew that none of his other issues could be looked at until the air had been cleared over his friend's visit, and the chances of that were slim. He chose to withdraw from Father Hughes's company.

Father Hughes felt somewhat betrayed by the younger priest—who, by treating the rectory as his own home, disregarded a diocesan statute. Although Father Hughes realized that the possibility of scandal arising from Luann's brief stay was minimal, the point mattered to him. He also resented Father DeWitt for not being more sensitive to his own situation. He had noticed that Ken rarely inquired about his sick father. The administrative duties of the pastorate were another thing Ken did not understand. As a result, the pastor felt alienated from the younger priest and lacked both the energy and will to bridge the gap.

"The operation was a success, but the patient died"—this maxim can be applied to the state of the relationship between the two priests. The issue of

houseguests will not arise again while both of them are stationed at Saint Thomas Rectory, but the relationship has effectively come to an end. Many priests who experience disagreement and disharmony spend months, if not years, tiptoeing around each other, avoiding sore memories, and seeking fraternal support away from the house. They are able to communicate and work together only in the most superficial way.

This dynamic quickly seeps into the life of the parish. The staff picks it up right away. Parishioners alert to changes in the parish atmosphere also notice. At the very least, the problem becomes a topic of conversation, drawing energy away from the mission of the parish. At worst, camps begin to form, with resentment and hostility aimed across imagined lines of loyalty. The resulting damage to the community's ability to function well can take years to heal and be forgotten.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH PREFERABLE

The priests need to remind themselves that how they handle their differences will have an impact on the parish community, as well as on how priests are perceived by the wider population. As public figures, they are looked to and judged more readily than people who lack such visibility. As disciples of Christ, they need to demonstrate reconciliation and not be satisfied with emotional stalemate. Because of this, responsible action means a willingness to adopt the collaborative style of conflict resolution. The time and energy involved may call for outside assistance, although the task is not beyond those who are open to working together to make things better.

A comprehensive treatment of the collaborative style of conflict resolution can be found in *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher and William Ury. They call their approach "principled negotiation." The reason this approach can be called collaborative is found in Fisher and Ury's first requirement: "don't bargain over positions." Their method seeks to engage the parties in thorough and satisfying interaction with a minimum of personal attacks and bruised egos. In their words, "look for mutual gains wherever possible, and . . . where your interests conflict . . . insist that the result be based on some fair standards independent of the will of either side." Drawing from some of the wisdom found in *Getting to Yes*, it is possible to put together a practical and effective approach to clergy conflict.

Fisher and Ury describe their method in four steps. The first is to separate the people from the problem. For someone who has a disappointed and bruised ego and who has difficulty expressing negative emotion,

this is a substantial step. Essentially, it involves wading through the emotional concerns of the situation and addressing them prior to dealing with anything else. For Fathers Hughes and DeWitt, this will mean acknowledging the undercurrent of tension between them. Oliver feels that Ken is not holding up his end and does not care about him. Ken feels that he's being treated like a child. It's easy to see that it may be necessary for a third, mediating party to enter the discussion. Even in the best of circumstances, men tend to find it difficult to talk about their emotional lives. When mutual offenses are perceived, it becomes all the more difficult.

The authors of *Getting to Yes* say this discussion of perceptions ought to be held "in a frank, honest manner without either side blaming the other for the problem." Rory Remer and Paul DeMesquita, writing in *Intimates in Conflict* (edited by Dudley Cahn), refer to this as the "confrontation" stage. Each person must respectfully listen to the other as he explains why he is upset. In explaining, each party must be careful to include three components: a description of the problem behavior, a report of the emotional impact, and a consequence of the behavior. For example, Oliver may unearth a great deal of the problem by saying to Ken, "I feel hurt when you don't ask about my father because it makes me feel that you don't care about him, or me." Ken can tell Oliver, "I feel like a child when you won't agree to dinner parties; it seems the rectory is being treated as if it were only your home." It is best to allow each person to state his grievances without responding, as responses and counter-responses can escalate into arguments.

Once the emotional elements have been addressed, the parties will often feel that a great burden has been lifted. Sometimes a new level of understanding seems to be sufficient to lead priests to rise from their discussion and promise to be more sensitive in the future. But it is unwise to leave it at that; there is a difference between launching a boat and piloting one. In order to address the problem well, the job must be thorough.

Fisher and Ury propose a second element in resolving conflict: focus on the interests of the parties as opposed to the positions. Father Hughes's position is that the rule against houseguests must be observed. Father DeWitt wants a new cook and the chance to open the rectory so his friends might socialize. As Fisher and Ury put it, "Your position is something you have decided on. Your interests are what caused you to so decide." For the two priests to shift their focus from positions to interests changes the discussion. Father Hughes may admit that he is not disagreeable to the idea of houseguests (as the presence

of a seminarian indicated), but he does not want to be surprised by one on a day when he is concerned with the crisis at home. Father DeWitt may accept the presence of this particular cook, but he really would like to see more appetizing food. It is also possible that Father Hughes does not understand how important the occasional dinner party is to Father DeWitt. Fisher and Ury state that the "basic problem in a negotiation lies not in conflicting positions but in the conflict between each side's needs, desires, concerns and fears." Once the parties move into the more flexible realm of interests, the opportunity to reach agreement increases dramatically.

The third point in principled negotiation is to attempt to invent options for mutual gain. When each party approaches discussion with only self-interest in mind, the process is hobbled. Fisher and Ury believe that for "a negotiator to reach agreement that meets his own self-interest, he needs to develop a solution which also appeals to the self-interest of the other." Here the creative juices are called into motion. The parties are invited to brainstorm in order to discover unconsidered possibilities. They are discouraged from latching onto the first reasonable solution. A mediator can be of tremendous help in this process. Brainstorming involves saying things that may be considered extreme. The presence of a mediator grants permission for this exercise and removes the burden of control from the parties.

Father DeWitt may find himself suggesting that he is willing to follow the diocesan rule on houseguests if he is able to have dinner parties twice a month. Father Hughes may suggest that the dinner parties be held on his days off. He asks Father DeWitt to provide a list of foods he would like to eat so that it may be given to the cook. Father DeWitt suggests a families party, at which Father Hughes's father will be the guest of honor. While these suggestions may not all be implemented, the freedom to raise them establishes a more open working relationship. Once the priests begin to work together, much of the work is done.

Fisher and Ury conclude their treatment of negotiation with the advice that both parties insist on objective criteria. In this example, the only objective criterion is that set by the diocese. However, the two men may agree to establish others. These men live lives surrounded by principles. Christian living sets standards that usually cannot be measured, although their presence or absence is clear. It is for the priests themselves to formulate ways of translating the principles of Christian living into their life together. Often, time set aside for discussion will help them to evaluate whether their coexistence is conforming to the letter and the spirit of priestly life. Regular discussion

can afford the opportunity to evaluate the relationship and address concerns before they become aggravated.

GOD WORKING THROUGH PRIESTS

Priests are usually assigned to live and work together. Even those who have the luxury of choosing their ministerial partners cannot know everything about one another before the work begins. This blindness sets a tone for misunderstanding. Add to it the unpredictable nature of priestly ministry, the many types of personalities encountered, and the potentially great differences in age, lifestyle, ecclesiology, and liturgical and ministerial points of origin, and the potential for conflict is great.

The nature of priestly work is that it draws from the interior life of the individual. As a result, the self-esteem of the priest is connected more closely to his ministry than might be true for someone in another profession. If he is highly praised, his ego can inflate, and he may envision unlimited possibilities for himself: the episcopacy, sainthood, the seat at the left hand of the Father. The needs of those around him may seem insignificant. On the other hand, if he struggles in ministry, he can become defensive and protective of that for which he is responsible. His self-image can diminish, and the tasks of ministry can seem overwhelming. He may adopt an authoritarian attitude to compensate for what he does not naturally possess.

The key to balanced priestly ministry is a realization that it is the Lord who is being served through his people. God's plan includes twists and turns, consolation and desolation. He instills great holiness in those who seem to be fragmented, and he humbles the proud. In working together, priests must not demand that either they or their partners in ministry be subjected to high expectations. It is the Lord who works through priests, and he does so in his own way.

Reduced (and elevated) to being channels of God's grace ought to humble priests before one another,

freeing them to be accepting of their brothers. In times of conflict, the call is to be humble before one another and to use methods that will defuse the tension and return the priests to a state of fraternal support.

As Jesuit Michael J. Buckley writes in *To Be a Priest*,

The experience of weakness deepens both our sensitivity to human religious need and our experience in prayer.

There is a collective consequence from all this. We must make such a life possible for one another. We must support one another in weakness, forgiving one another our daily faults and carrying one another's burdens. It would be absurd to maintain weakness as essentially a part of the priestly vocation and then to belittle those who are deficient; to resent those who are insensitive, unsophisticated or clumsy; to allow disagreements to become hostilities; or to continue battles and angers because of personal histories. It would be a dreadful thing for us to reject under one criterion or another [one] whom God has called.

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Helping Through Listening

Clarisse Belanger, S.S.A., Ed.D.

In my early years, I was taught that God likes it when we talk to him: He likes to listen to us and to help us when we have concerns, and he loves it when we listen to him. In my eager young mind, I used to envision God bending over in his heaven, smiling and holding his opened hand near his ear in a gesture of listening. He was truly spending time with me, listening to my concerns. What a comforting moment of intimacy this was for me. God loved me enough to spend time listening and sharing with me.

Through the years, these precious moments multiplied as my concerns grew. I learned the invaluable lesson that healing takes place through listening and sharing with another. This most wonderful insight became the basis of my ministry with the bereaved. Who needs to be listened to more than a person who has lost a loved one? And who is better qualified to do this work than one who has been listened to and who shares with one's loving God in prayer?

One day I received a call from a concerned father whose 15-year-old son wanted to meet with me concerning his reaction to the death of his mother. She had died of cancer about nine months earlier, and he was devastated. I was glad that this adolescent had taken the initiative and was open to sharing and listening. I was also pleased to have an opportunity to share with a bereaved 15-year-old because I had been unable to assist my own nephew when he experienced the same trauma at the age of 15. Perhaps I could make a difference in this youngster's life. I was excited about the growth and healing he might experience by expressing his grief in a safe and intimate environment. I was not only interested in focusing on his loss; more important, I wanted to nurture the new life that can come from honest sharing and listening and the willingness to face the future with courage and enthusiasm.

When I first met the young man, he was very talkative and had difficulty sitting still. His conversation revolved around his need to excel at school. As I listened, I could sense his anxiety and obsession to please his remaining parent. He talked incessantly

about his dad, a successful businessman, in whose steps he felt he needed to follow. Little was said about his grief and the devastating loss of his mother.

Then one day he announced that he had had many panic attacks at home and didn't know how to handle them. As we explored his anxieties, he slowly acknowledged that his only goal now was to excel at school to please his dad. He expressed the fear that his father might die, just as his mother had. He felt better upon learning that his dad's physical examination showed that he was healthy.

With my encouragement, he talked to his father about his overriding need to please him. His dad made it clear that he only wanted him to do his best. Although this was reassuring, the boy admitted that the need was still in him and it was difficult to let go of it. I let him know that such behavior is normal during the grieving process. I also told him that he was very insightful and in touch with his needs. His self-esteem was low at this time, and he needed an ego boost.

He looked me straight in the eye and said he was all mixed up. Having lost his mother, he felt he was no longer a child, but he didn't know how to make the transition into adulthood. He felt like he was on a rollercoaster. He missed his mom, who had always been there to comfort him. Now she was gone, and he felt so abandoned. No one can comfort you like a mother. His dad was a busy man. He felt cared for by his father, but there was a difference.

The young man was trying to cope with many anxieties. His self-image was striving to establish itself, and he was extremely vulnerable to stress. He admitted that he felt frightened, insecure, and isolated because of his perception that there were few places he could go for help. Also, as none of his friends had experienced the death of a mother, they didn't know what to say to him, so he had no peer support system. He felt different. He found himself telling his friends to be nice to their parents because they couldn't know how long they would have them. Most had the typical teenage response of denial that the death of a parent could happen to them.

As I continued to listen to this young man non-judgmentally, he opened up more and more. Little by little, he began to talk about his feelings. He revealed that an additional stress in his life was that his dad was now dating. He hated this new development with a passion. How could his father even think of another woman in his life so soon after his mother's death? This was very threatening to him. He didn't want to lose his father to another woman. Besides, who could ever take his mother's place?

Like many adolescents in his situation, he thought he had done something to cause his mother's death. He accepted my assurance that this was not so. He also talked about this anxiety with a family member, which helped him sort out his feelings.

Another burden he carried was his sense of responsibility to help ease the pain of his family, coupled with the feeling that he couldn't do so because his own pain was so great. It was important for him to take care of his dad so that nothing would happen to him. He talked about this great pressure within himself during many of his sessions with me.

I listened and listened, allowing him to hear himself verbalize the mental and emotional ghosts that haunted him. He realized that he was carrying a big burden. I made it clear that grieving relies not on one's ability to understand but on one's ability to feel. This was a new concept for him. Feelings were frightening, especially when he was alone. He was grateful that he was beginning to express them. My challenge was to be real with this youngster. Intuitively, I knew that he didn't need a performance; he needed an act of love.

BIRTHDAY BRINGS CRISIS

He needed love especially when he turned 16. Where was his mother now that he was 16? She should be here to hug me, to make me a cake, to see me grow up, he said. The pain of deprivation was real as he wiped the tears from his eyes. I want her back, he told me both verbally and nonverbally. I want her to rejoice in my growing up. His anger was real, and he was happy to have a safe and supportive environment in which to express it. He described feelings of wanting to hit back at God for taking his mom away. Why would a loving God let this happen?

I encouraged him to write a letter to his mom as a way of exploring his feelings and to share that letter with me if he felt comfortable doing so. I explained that perhaps some of his frustration, guilt, anger, and sadness stemmed from his not having had a chance to tell her how he really felt before she died. New feelings are experienced after a death as well, and it can be very helpful to express these feelings in the form of a letter. He wasn't sure he would do this. He thought about it

for a while and finally decided to write the letter. It was a very painful exercise for him. He shed many tears and even went to his punching bag a few times.

After writing and sharing this letter with me, he was a lot different. No longer as restless as before, he could sit for an hour without pacing. But it was only later, when he answered the letter for his mother, that he was able to diminish his obsession with high grades. As I listened intently to him, he smiled and said that he didn't have to drive himself so hard any more. He would strive for interdependence instead of independence. These were big changes for him, and he was excited. He now knew he had choices; he was not locked in. He became aware that he could choose his attitude toward himself and others. At this time we talked about ways in which he could memorialize his mother's life. He ultimately arranged with his family to gather together, light a candle, and sing along with one of her favorite recordings. Then they put flowers on her grave.

He found many ways to express his grief, but he did so especially by talking to me. He was the center of my attention, and he liked that a lot. It became quite clear that my listening was profoundly healing. I didn't have to make it better; I didn't have to have all the answers, I didn't have to take away the pain of loss. It was his pain, and he needed to experience it in his own time and his own unique way. He knew that he had gone through a lot, and that profound grief is preceded by deep love, which gives life meaning. He tearfully acknowledged that his pain was great, but he would not stop loving. Loving and allowing himself to be loved was putting him back together again. His faith was a great support to him, but he was still having a difficult time accepting that a loving God would take his mother away. The more he verbalized this, and the more his feelings were accepted, the more his anger began to dissipate.

To listen and to share his grief and suffering was draining for me, yet also enriching at a deep personal level. I was pleased that at the end of our last session, he told me he would like to volunteer to listen and share with me when I worked with other adolescents. He was so proud of himself. He had learned a valuable lesson and wanted to share it to heal others.

During the ten weeks in which I listened to this grieving young man, I trusted in his natural capacity to heal himself and go on to new life. In order to do this work, I need to nourish and revitalize myself through various diversions such as exercising, walking, and listening to classical music. Most especially, I need the comfort and joy of intimacy with my loving God, which has been a great part of my life since childhood.

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A Psychological and Historical Portrait of Jesus

Len Sperry, Ph.D., M.D.

Curiosity about the historical Jesus is in no short supply these days, it would seem, given the increasing coverage of Jesus in national news magazines and in a number of recent trade books. Ministry personnel, as well as the general public, are curious about what Jesus was like as a person and how he understood himself and his mission. These are identity issues that all of us face. An individual's identity is formed in relationship to others in a given family and cultural context. Thus, the identity question is not simply Who am I? and Who do I say I am? but also Who do others say I am? Actually, scripture has Jesus asking the second identity question: "Who do people say that I am?" (Mark 8:27). Presumably, he first asked himself the question Who am I? and its variant, Who do I say I am?

Unfortunately, these questions and answers are not specified in the scriptures, nor has consensus been reached by biblical scholars or social scientists. Two provocative books address these identity questions. One is *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, volume 2 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* by the eminent priest and scripture scholar Joseph Meier. The other, entitled *Jesus at Thirty: A Psychological and Historical Study*, is by John Miller, a psychiatric rehabilitation specialist who also happens to be a scripture scholar. Both offer some remarkably keen insights into the personhood and identity of Jesus that many will find helpful. This article highlights those insights and provides some commentary.

PROCESS OF IDENTITY FORMATION

To better comprehend the important insights of Meier and Miller, it is useful to clarify such terms as

identity, identity formation, identification, generativity, and individuation. Erik Erickson described identity as the feeling of an enduring and integrated inner sameness. Identity formation arises from the selective rejection and mutual assimilation of earlier identifications and their absorption into a new configuration. Identification is the process of taking on the fundamental character of a deeply respected person and making it one's own. In childhood, identification serves multiple functions to promote normal personality development.

Typically, the child first forms an intense identification and bond with the mother. This identification with the mother changes to an intense identification with the father during the oedipal period. Freud believed that the young individual's representation of God—one's heavenly father—reflects this identification with one's earthly father. In her remarkable clinical study of twenty adults (ten men and ten women), psychoanalyst Ana-Marie Rizzutto was unable to confirm Freud's contention. Rather, she found that the formation of one's identification with and representation of God is based on one's identification not only with the father but also with the mother. She also found that the image or representation of God took form throughout the developmental process and did not depend on the oedipal conflict.

Identification is not a process confined to childhood. It also furthers the developmental process in adulthood in the mentor relationship. While early identifications shape psychic structure, later identifications, such as mentor relationships, add specificity to the adult personality. One of the most obvious specificities is the establishment of a work or professional identity. For many individuals, a close

relationship with a mentor is a crucial factor in career choice. Sometimes, an individual's career decision is considerably different from that expected by parents and family.

The mentor relationship involves three phases. First, the mentor is idealized by the protégé. It is speculated that the internal representation of the mentor is invested with narcissism displaced from the self. In the second phase, aspects of the mentor are internalized within the self, and the self is dramatically changed as the desired attributes of the mentor are incorporated, usually with intense pleasure. In the final phase, a separation from the mentor occurs, leading to further individuation. Considerable pain may be experienced in this phase, but after a period of working through, a stronger sense of self and identity emerges. Finally, individuation is the achievement of selfhood, brought about by a gradual fulfillment of the person's individual capacities and functions.

Another important psychological construct relevant to identity and individuation is generativity. Erikson defines generativity as the care and facilitation of a younger generation. If successful, generativity is the key to individuation and greater identity cohesion. In the usual course of events, the young adult's struggle with intimacy over a sense of isolation is resolved by marriage and the establishment of a family. Erikson observes that adults need children, whereas children need caring. While marriage and family are not the only routes to developing a sense of generativity, some cultures and subcultures "demand" them. Individuals who are unable to be generative feel a profound sense of personal stagnation, in which they experience themselves as standing still intellectually and emotionally.

Finally, while identity is largely a psychological construct, it is not exclusively so. Rather, identity is the outcome of a complex interplay of at least five sets of factors: biological inheritance; cultural values; identification with, and the response of, significant others such as parent figures and mentors; family expectations; and individual talents and potentialities. In twentieth-century Western culture, one's job or professional identity is often the basis of one's personal identity. That is, many people identify themselves by their profession (e.g., priest, accountant, working mother). However, personal identity is broader than professional identity. In Western culture, personal identity usually also includes social identity and gender identity but does not include one's family and cultural identity, even though it is influenced by them. In contrast, in first-century Palestine, cultural and family identity largely specified, and perhaps even determined, one's professional or work identity.

DIMENSIONS OF HISTORICAL PORTRAIT

Some key insights into the identity of Jesus are discussed in Meier's monumental study *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, especially in the second volume. Meier estimates that Jesus was born somewhere between 3 and 7 B.C. and grew up in Nazareth, a small hill town in Lower Galilee. His mother was named Mary, and it is believed that his father was Joseph. He had four brothers—James, Joseph, Judah, and Simon—and some sisters, who are mentioned but not named.

Jesus' family would have practiced an uncomplicated type of Jewish piety widespread among the peasants of Lower Galilee. Ordinary Galilean Jews from the lower strata of society who lived in the countryside would have had no time for or interest in the theological issues, special observances, or disputes of the Essenes, Pharisees, or Sadducees. For these Galilean Jews, fidelity to the Jewish religion meant fidelity to Mosaic law. Surrounded as they were by Gentiles and Hellenistic culture, these Galilean Jews clung tenaciously to their religion, which both specified and reinforced their identity.

As the firstborn of his family, Jesus undoubtedly received special attention from his parents. Not surprisingly, since his father was a woodworker, Jesus was trained as one and followed in his father's footsteps. It appears that Joseph died sometime prior to Jesus' public ministry. Presumably, his mother, brothers, and sisters were alive during his ministry. Meier speculates that at least some of them survived into the early days of the church. Gospel accounts indicate that signs of tension between Jesus and his family surfaced once his public ministry began. John's gospel notes that "not even his brothers believed in him" (7:5), while Mark has Jesus' family saying that he was "beside himself" (3:21).

Jesus would ordinarily have used Aramaic as his daily language, and occasionally might have spoken Greek for commercial and social purposes. His knowledge of Hebrew would have been gained by listening to and perhaps being taught to read the scriptures in the synagogue in Nazareth. There is no indication that Jesus received more than minimal formal education. Whether he could read at all is debatable, although Meier contends that he was literate. Most likely, Jesus would have delivered his teaching orally in Aramaic to ordinary Jews, while in disputes with learned scribes or pious Pharisees he might have quoted the scriptures in Hebrew.

As a woodworker in Nazareth, Jesus would have achieved a modest standard of living, as compared with that of most other Jews in the Galilean countryside. His trade would have allowed him to have con-

siderable contact with Hellenic culture through building projects; he likely would have been involved in Sepphoris, a Roman village approximately three miles from Nazareth. By today's standards, he would have seemed poor, but he was no poorer than the vast majority of Galilean Jews. In addition, his status as a pious Jewish layman in an honor/shame society assured him a modicum of honor, without which ordinary people would have found existence very difficult.

A MARGINAL PERSON

It appears that Jesus never married. In the eyes of his peers, he would have seemed socially marginal because of his conscious choice of a celibate state. In approximately 28 A.D., at the age of 34, Jesus would have seemed even more unusual and marginal for breaking with his occupation, economic status, and close family ties to pursue an uncertain future as an itinerant prophet and healer. In so doing, he would have relinquished much if not all of the honor that had accrued in his former state of life.

Jesus appears to have followed the lead of another marginal Jew, John the Baptist. Without the presence of the baptist, Jesus' public ministry is hardly intelligible. Meier suggests that the baptist served as Jesus' "mentor." In about 28 A.D., John, an ascetic Jewish prophet, appeared in the lower Jordan valley, proclaiming an imminent judgment on all of Israel. According to John, the final judgment was to be administered by an eschatological figure, whom he referred to as "the stronger one" or "the one who comes." This mysterious figure would show his superiority to John by baptizing with the Holy Spirit instead of with water. Many Jews flocked to the Jordan River for John's baptism, since John's message was of considerable appeal: God had sent this prophet to prepare his sinful people for the end times. Among the Jews who accepted John's call to national repentance and baptism was Jesus. It can be deduced that Jesus knew John, accepted his eschatological message and baptism, and became his disciple.

MINISTRY TO EVERYONE

Jesus emerged from the baptist's ministry to inaugurate his own public ministry, which eclipsed John's in geographic scope by extending to all of Israel. Moving from the Jordan valley to Galilee, Jesus reached out to all classes of Jews as he journeyed through Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. He also made contact with Samaritans and pagans. He continued to use baptism as a symbol of purification. Besides expanding John's geographic venue, Jesus expanded the baptist's basic message. Jesus' proclamation was

marked much less by threats of doom and much more by the good news that God would save and restore his sinful and scattered people. According to Meier, Jesus used the relatively rare phrase "the kingdom of God" to evoke the triumphant coming of God as king to rule Israel in the last days.

While the kingdom of God meant the full appearance of God's victorious rule over the world in the future, Jesus emphasized the kingdom in the present: "the kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17:21). This was most evident in Jesus' preaching and teaching, particularly through the parables, which confronted listeners with a kingdom of God that challenged their present ways of thinking and living. To hear and internalize the meaning of these parables of the kingdom was to experience the coming of the kingdom into one's own existence. This presence of God's kingdom and rule could be powerfully experienced in Jesus' exorcisms and healings. His exorcisms were a striking sign that Satan's hold over God's people was being broken in the present. For the crowds that followed Jesus, his miracles were a very striking feature of his ministry.

This belief in Jesus, who was both prophet and miracle worker, provides an important key to understanding who the Jews thought Jesus was. In the Hebrew Bible, few of Israel's prophets were reported to have performed a series of miracles as a regular part of their ministry. Jesus' miracle working singled him out from most of the other religious leaders, including John the Baptist. Such miracle working by an itinerant prophet would have triggered memories of Elijah and Elisha for the Jews of that era.

According to Meier, the following conclusion can be drawn from historical data and deduction about the portrait of Jesus. First, Jesus was seen by others and himself as an eschatological prophet. He proclaimed the imminent coming of God's kingly role and reign. Second, unlike John the Baptist, Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God already present in his ministry. Third, his working of miracles, particularly those involving the raising of the dead, cast Jesus in the role of a prophet who spoke rather than wrote. Finally, Jesus taught general ethical imperatives about love and forgiveness, and presumed to give concrete directions on how to observe Mosaic law. He located his authority to interpret and even change the law not in recognized traditional channels of authority but rather in his own ability to know intuitively what was God's will for the people of Israel in the last days. It was this convergence and configuration of different traits that characterized and identified Jesus' uniqueness within Palestinian Judaism. In Meier's view, this eschatological prophet and miracle worker is the historical Jesus retrievable by modern historical methods.

COMMENTS ON MAIER'S BOOK

Although biblical exegetes are exceedingly precise in their use of technical language regarding historical data and biblical designations, they may be less precise with other types of language. This is the case with Meier, who is notably imprecise in his use of psychological and sociological language and designations. For example, he does not specify a definition of the term *identity*. Sometimes the term has such nonspecificity that it overlaps constructs such as role, role expectation, and cultural expectation. It is often unclear whether he is referring to Jesus' personal, family, cultural, or professional/work identity. Of course, designations such as role and role expectation are sociological constructs that have little connection to the psychological construct of identity.

Although an entire section of his book is entitled "Mentor," Meier never once defines the meaning of this term. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether he means that Jesus had a true mentoring relationship with John the Baptist in the psychological sense, as John Miller would contend, or was simply a follower of the baptist.

DIMENSIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PORTRAIT

Now we turn to the insights of John Miller in *Jesus at Thirty*. His discussions of family dynamics, mentoring, and generativity clarify and elucidate the identity of Jesus in the context of historical-critical data about him.

Family Dynamics. Tradition holds that Mary and Joseph were loving and caring parents and that Jesus had a relatively healthy relationship with them. Thus, it may be assumed that Jesus identified positively with both Mary and Joseph. As noted earlier, Rizzuto contends that one's God-image reflects the representation of both parents—although the quality of one's God representation is usually attributed to one's identification with the earthly father. What about Jesus and his image of God? Miller contends that Jesus' early upbringing was loving and healthy and concludes that he must have had a positive and healthy image of God as a loving father. However, Miller speculates that after Joseph died—probably while Jesus was an older adolescent or young adult—the tensions and demands on Jesus from his mother grew intense. Miller refers to this as the "dark side" to Jesus' experience of the father.

This dark side involved Jesus' estrangement from his family of origin at the outset of his public ministry. The death of Joseph probably was an emotionally complex and wrenching experience for Jesus as he assumed his

father's role with his mother. At first Jesus probably was more than a competent father surrogate. Later, when his public ministry began, this must have changed. It would not have been unreasonable for Mary to be mystified by her son's shift in loyalty from her and her biological family to God's all-encompassing family. Nor would it have been surprising for her to think that her son was "beside himself" and in need of restraint (Mark 3:21, 33). It would not seem unreasonable to conclude that like many mothers in her predicament, she was probably more focused on her own needs and necessities than on those of her son.

Generativity and Sexuality. In Miller's view, generativity characterized much of Jesus' life as a young adult. A gulf opened between him and his biological family at the beginning of his public ministry. Miller contends that this permitted Jesus to be moved by compassion for the distraught and suffering "lost sheep of the house of Israel." The concomitant extrusion from his family of origin and his mission to the "lost sheep" probably accounted for his striking words about his family being those related not by ties of blood but by their common bond with a merciful God (Mark 3:34 ff). Because Jesus was celibate and without a family of his own, it seems somewhat difficult to explain the generativity he displayed. But then it is also difficult to account for the extraordinary giftedness and compassion he displayed in his public ministry. Nevertheless, Miller hypothesizes that since it is likely that Joseph died prematurely, Jesus would have experienced the challenge of heading a family. Because he was the eldest son, it would have been expected that Jesus take on the demanding responsibilities of surrogate husband and father in the family of his widowed mother.

This possibility sheds considerable light on the personality dynamics of Jesus. It is quite compelling, as it casts Jesus' celibacy in a very different light, as the result of something other than a personal decision or occupational necessity. It appears that powerful cultural expectations and forces came into play as a result of his father's premature death. As Miller notes, it was the Jewish father's responsibility to find a wife for his son. However, if he died before having done so, the eldest son was to take his place in the care of the family left behind. Assuming this role invariably delayed or nullified the son's plans for marriage.

Against this backdrop of his father's death, many retrieved facts of the life of Jesus make historical sense. These include (1) Jesus' subsequent role as guardian of his father's family; (2) Jesus' baptism at the Jordan, where he humbled himself and experienced God as a gracious father; (3) Jesus' emotional bonding with John the Baptist, who became for him

a surrogate father and perhaps even took on some of the qualities of a mentor at this crucial period of his life; (4) Jesus' creativity and courage, after John's arrest, in establishing his own ministry that significantly extended John's baptismal ministry; and (5) Jesus' wise, fatherlike talent for relating effectively with all types of people in diverse situations.

COMMENTS ON MILLER'S BOOK

Miller's psychological portrayal offers a valuable explanation of the meaning of some of the historical-critical data concerning the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Specifically, Miller provided an incisive analysis of the role of the family dynamics that influenced Jesus' identity and ministry. Particularly valuable is the portrayal of Jesus' relationship with Joseph, his putative father, and some of the implications of his father-surrogate role in his decision to remain celibate. Furthermore, Miller's excursus on the Eriksonian theme of Jesus' generativity, displayed in the course of his public ministry, is exceptional.

Miller could probably be faulted for his application of Levinson's developmental stage model. The research interviews that were the basis for that model involved a group of career-oriented, largely middle-class American males. This group is probably so different from the first-century Galilean males that were peers of Jesus that there appears to be little basis for generalizing from Levinson's theory to Jesus. It also seems that Miller has overestimated the impact of John's discipleship. Since the baptist purportedly sent his disciple to inquire about Jesus' mission (Matt. 11:1-6), it could be concluded that if John had been Jesus' mentor, he would have been instrumental in forging that mission and Christ's professional identity. Interestingly, although Meier entitles part 1 of his book "Mentor" in reference to the Jesus-baptist relationship, Meier does not discuss mentorship directly. Rather, he utilizes the term *disciple*, which is not synonymous with *mentor*.

In addition, while Levinson's notion of the "age 30 transition" has some appeal as an explanation, it appears that Miller must distort historical-critical data to make it fit. For instance, because identity crisis is a key factor in the age 30 transition, Miller is obliged to contend that Jesus experienced an extended identity crisis. Furthermore, some form of mentoring relationship is required for resolution of this developmental stage. Accordingly, Miller is obliged to posit such a relationship, and he does so with the baptist. Unfortunately, he attempts to connect generativity with the age 30 transition, while Levinson would connect generativity with the age 40 or age 50 transition. Miller appears to be caught between two de-

velopmental stage theories—those of Erikson and Levinson—that are not consistent with each other, especially on the matter of generativity. It seems that the historical Jesus does not comfortably fit either Erikson's or Levinson's theory, partly because life expectancies are much longer today than in the first century. Perhaps Miller's psychological portrait of Jesus would have been more valuable had he relinquished his reliance on Daniel Levinson's developmental stage theory and instead explored some other promising psychological perspectives, such as the evolving self theory of Robert Kegan, or object relations theory as articulated by Rizzuto, to explain Jesus' psychological development, identity, and individuation.

CONCLUDING NOTE

It appears that the professional identity of Jesus, formed during the early part of his public ministry, was a result of at least five factors: his earlier identifications with his parents; family dynamics after Joseph's death; his decision to remain celibate in the context of a dominant culture favoring marriage and family; the impact of John the Baptist; and, of course, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God's revelatory self-communication. Thus, Jesus' identity was fashioned by historical, cultural, familial, psychological, and spiritual dynamics. Both Meier and Miller are to be commended for their significant contributions to biblical Christology, as well as to the education and edification of ministry personnel who are neither scripture scholars nor psychologists. Both writers offer ministry personnel an understanding of the heart and mind of Jesus that can enrich both their personal and professional lives.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Meier, J. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. Vol. 2. *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*. New York, New York: Doubleday, 1994.
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Mercy

James Torrens, S.J.

"I didn't murder anyone,
I just did drugs." Don't lump me
with the rest you plead.

Much as you now make sense,
Mercy, someone pronounced you
out of your right mind—

little impulse control,
plus whatever the soul doctors
write you medication for.

I'd prescribe care of teeth,
some dependable arts,
no more shame about reading.

How to defang your habit?
The myth is your guardians
(do we belie it?) are well.

I admire people who can make up stories—not just the accomplished fibbers, but those who can dream up fictions for prose or poetry. That is a gift not to be underrated. I find myself having to rely on what has really happened, the more accurate and uninflated the detail the better. The poem published here is based on a sentence that startled me, from someone in my Sunday congregation. Her name, of

course, needs disguising. My Sunday ministry, originating as teamwork with the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, takes me to a prison unit connected to a huge psychiatric hospital. This forensic psychiatric center figures, in turn, within a huge system, the New York State Office of Mental Health. Anyone thinking that the mental illness plea is an easy way out for an offender or that the U.S. court system is lax about the mentally ill had best contemplate the tight hold of such a system.

I began this ministry seven years ago. Many of the early worshipers remain in the facility, whether by reason of a really serious crime or poor legal representation or continuing mental illness, which is judged to make them unsafe. On many a Sunday, offering mass and trying out a homily on a restive and quite ecumenical congregation of perhaps two dozen, I have asked myself, "What am I doing here? What is going on?" Often enough, though, on just those days, a patient will come up after mass and ask for a blessing and tell me, "Thanks for coming. I've had a really bad week."

Liturgical thinking these days emphasizes the word *celebration*. It is a strange kind of celebration among those who are mentally ill and incarcerated, with every right to be depressed. Or maybe it is a special kind of celebration, a light in pretty thick darkness. Singing does the soul good, so I pick hymns hopefully from the back of the missalette; often they bring on

a cacophony to set one's teeth on edge, but then I fall back again on "Amazing Grace," which everyone seems to know.

My most frequent reflection in this environment is on the vanishing line between well and ill. Thanks to available medications, someone diagnosed as paranoid or schizophrenic (such elastic categories) can pass to relative freedom from illusions and obsessions. (Medicine does not seem much help yet in stilling voices). But sometimes the dosage can induce zombie states that men and women may have every right to resist. In practice, this right proves very hard to exercise without one's being branded recalcitrant and having one's physician, the psychiatrist, witness against one at any court appearance. Talk about Catch 22.

The men and women in this prison hospital have an art therapist who helps them toward self-expression with watercolors and acrylics. Their most recent efforts are now on show, and a great surprise. A capacity for form and imagination—even inner tranquility—shines out in them. These paintings, of which I would certainly be incapable, have a deeply human cast, displaying qualities often buried in their creators. It is good to see the staff members take as much pride in them as they do.

I should not have been so surprised. I call on some of these people as lectors on Sunday, helping them with the Hebrew names or New Testament jaw-breakers like "Ephesians" or "Colossians." One or two of them are welcome soloists with hymns or poems after Communion. And however inattentive they may seem at the homily, a right and striking answer may well come when a question is put, along with some palpable craziness.

This past Sunday a new patient interrupted as I was starting my homily, to ask: "Who was Jesus praying to when he prayed? To a superior being?"

No, I told him, not superior. Jesus was divine as well as human.

"You mean there are two Gods?"

No, no.

Then somebody tried answering him: "God came down to redeem us on the cross, a human offering."

"Oh, I see," said the questioner, quiet for a moment, with the Incarnation and the Trinity looming out at us as a pretty big mystery. So suddenly, due to someone's lack of impulse control, without my prepared exhortation even getting off the ground, we had found ourselves repeating one of the Christological councils of the early church. A line from Saint Matthew came into my head: "You have hidden these things from the wise and clever and revealed them to the simple."

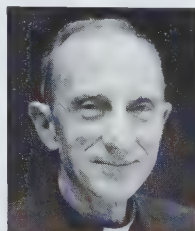
What of the warders and guardians of these trou-

bled men and women (no more disoriented than many I pass on the streets of Manhattan)? Because security is essential at all times, the guards must have authoritative voices and be capable of force when necessary. But that, to my mind, is subsidiary to the essential, the real human task of offering kindness, encouragement, understanding. The patients have no trouble detecting which staff do and do not fulfill that role. Is their work just a job for them, or do they actually care? Big difference. I have certainly heard accounts of mistreatment, not easy to verify though not hard to explain.

I remember an event from my days as a young Jesuit teacher that can serve as an analogy. I had a somewhat unruly class (lamblike, I'm sure, by today's standards). One student whom I found especially annoying I sent often to the vice principal—who one day said to me, "Do you suppose you might have it in for so and so?" That was a revelation. To my mind, apparently, the calmness of the class had depended on my controlling this one high-school boy. How often that must happen in other contexts—like a prison, where someone who speaks out may seem a threat to the exercise of control and can easily become a target. If the controller has something of a mean streak or comes from a rough background, how dearly that may cost the nonpassive patient.

What about me? On Sunday mornings with this cooped-up family—individuals whose self-respect makes many of them maintain that they have little in common with the others—do I ever get any of that "we lepers" feeling? Certainly. You come to realize quickly how precious and how precarious is mental balance, and what terrible odds are at play against it in many lives. How much there is that can trouble the most placid waters.

During the petitions at mass, it is moving to hear the patients' concern for family and friends, their prayers for victims of catastrophes they have seen on television and, indeed, for fellow patients and for staff. At such a time you see the dignity, the humanity of these children of God. That old patronizing category of *minus habentes*—the less well equipped—will no longer do. One becomes aware that these men and women are riding the shoulders of the Good Shepherd, and one hopes to be of that number.



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Feasting for Health's Sake

Pamela A. Smith, SS.C.M., Ph.D.

In the midst of our contemporary fling with ecospirituality, "biophilia" (a term coined by entomologist E. O. Wilson), and nature mysticism, some harsh reminders of the downside of nature come our way. Ethicist James Gustafson has offered, in *A Sense of the Divine: The Natural Environment from a Theocentric Perspective*, this humble admonition: "Conflict or dissonance, as well as harmony and consonance, are part of nature and our place in it." Alice Walker, a professed neopagan pantheist, admits, in *The Same River Twice: Honoring the Difficult*, that the selfsame nature that soothes and solaces, washes and nurtures, rouses and dazzles her also seems to have "betrayed" her by way of the debilitating effects of undiagnosed Lyme disease, which afflicted her throughout the making of the film *The Color Purple*.

There are many of us lovers of forests and sunsets, dune grass and gulls, starry nights, snowladen evergreens, and summer sunflowers who have learned to be wary of nature at large. For some of us, the wariness is born of asthma and allergies; for others, myopia or night blindness, hemophilia or lupus, arthritis or skin cancer. Viruses, injuries, genetic roulette, and, likely as not, some of the toxins that spice our environment are the demons that give us pause about naively endorsing the natural world as if it were resoundingly the site of personal bliss. I have not even

mentioned, of course, the obvious wrath of tornado, volcano, avalanche, or El Niño and the havoc experienced by humans as a result of these natural phenomena. My own experience has included one major flood, several blizzards, a few hurricanes, and nearly thirty years of insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.

All of this is prefatory to saying that, despite a bit of personal ambivalence on the topic of the healing munificence of nature, I would like to share some recent reminders of the simple ways in which reconnection with the natural world can restore spunk and spirit to one weighed down by the day-in and day-out demands of disease.

A MINI-RETREAT

As winter leaned into a recent March spring, I spent two and a half days at a country estate where a friend was housesitting. The visit was an intentional mini-retreat, and the site was an unintentional spa, free of charge. The nights at Apple Valley Farms in lower Michigan whistle with wind and are dense with trees. The days, whether sunny or foggy, offer vistas of grass, rolling rises topped with evergreens, rocky paths, woodland weeds, and lakeside reeds.

On my first day, I rested, eased, pondered the gospel of Mark, wrote in my journal, made spinach salad

and tuna-and-pasta casserole, snacked on fresh mixed fruit, drank light teas, and waited for the moon to rise. It was the last day of winter. On the second day, I had lunch with four deer whom I could watch from the kitchen nook as they munched everything edible at the drive's edge and in the garden by the guest house. I snuggled at night, happily away from phones and memos and meetings, and was delighted to be dusted (visually, since I was safely sheltered and warm) by surprising wafts of overnight snow every time I woke.

The experience was akin, I think, to Elijah's experience of God in the wilderness: not in the wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire, but in the gentle breeze, the slightest whispering sound (1 Kings 19:11–12).

As a result of the experience, I feel impelled to write a bit of a prescription. I had gone away not so much because of job stress but because of sheer diabetic fatigue. I was weary of shots, blood tests, erratic swings in blood sugar, the weight of managing the disease in the midst of everything else, and the ceaseless search for a better therapeutic approach. My short time away was so restorative that I believe my learnings may benefit not only fatigued diabetics but also those worn down by multiple sclerosis, arthritis, hypertension, depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, and other ailments. My simple conclusions follow.

TIME OUT

Like many people with chronic illness, I am astonishingly compliant. I take the injections and the medications, perform the blood tests, exercise, follow the diet as best I can, try to stay up-to-date on the latest research, and keep on keeping on, but habitually neglect the other ingredient to good self-care: rest. That's the area in which I've cheated for years. Suddenly I'm 50, my diabetes swings high and low manic-depressively, and I wonder why I'm tired and don't have the resilience I used to have after a bad night or a bad day. It has taken one spiritual director, two doctors, one seminary rector, several friends, and a sudden onslaught of common sense for me to realize that I need more sleep at night and a midday walk-away.

But I also find that along with daily recovery time, retreats and changes of scenery can work marvels, especially if one can find a site that's secure, comfortable, companionable, and uncluttered enough to let in the wind and wild creatures.

Instead of sick days, it makes sense now and then to take a non-sick day, or two, or several, as preventive medicine and for spiritual restoration. Mark's gospel, by the way, says a number of things about rest

and prayer and coming away for sanity and communion with God.

THE SIMPLER, THE BETTER

Henry David Thoreau hit on something when he went to Walden Pond. Annie Dillard hit on something when she went to Tinker Creek. What they found was what monastics, prophets, and Jesus intuitively knew: that the best places to open to God and bare one's soul are deserts, mountains, shorelines, gardens—quiet places where nights come alive amid startling stillness and daybreak steals over a chattering, waking world. One can hear God where one can hear a human heartbeat, the skittering of a squirrel, and the swish of wind in tall reeds.

Some of us travel with a load of inevitable and essential medical stuff. Necessity is necessity, but I'm beginning to see that a lot of extra clothing, tempting correspondence, and reading material is best left behind. Traveling as lightly as possible to a somewhat secluded earthly spot is the appropriate response to Thoreau's great commandment: "Simplify, simplify!" It is also, of course, the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount.

TASTE, EAT, ENJOY

Christianity itself is not particularly grim. Nor do the gospels seem to me to be particularly ascetical. Assuredly, there are injunctions to fast—for the sake of mission, for the driving out of demons. But there are also numerous feedings, socializings, and drinkings of wine in the Good News.

It seems to me that the healthiest thing for a chronically ill person to do is to learn how to feast. Feast the eyes on beautiful landscapes and the sheen of birds, fish, animals. Feast the skin on the feel of moss, sand, mud, snow, tree bark, rock, vine. Feast nose and mouth on the smells and tastes of fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, dried apples, herbs, teas, juices, warm bread. Feast the ears on owl hoot, gull cry, crow call, deer honk, twig snap, and lap of water against rock.

Simple feasting is often lost on us as our computers whirl and we rush through business lunches. Feasting needs freedom from agenda. As a diabetic, I realize that I atrophy and die, bit by bit, the longer I go without conscious, contemplative sensory feasting. Merely keeping alive is a complex and frustrating daily project. I need strong, festive reminders that life is rich, holy, healing, joyous. To be able to see, taste, touch, hear, smell God's ready gifts helps me again to say yes, life is good—very good. Deuteronomy's injunction to "choose life" (30:19–20) comes alive again in me.

BANISH OVERCOMPENSATION

Should workaholics and the chronically ill become hedonists? No, that's not really what I mean at all. But what I have noticed is that some chronically ill people tend to overcompensate in terms of drive and work. I, in any case, have done so and still do. Long ago I heard horror stories and worst-case scenarios of what I'd probably be like after 20 to 25 years of diabetes. So I bordered on obsessive-compulsive urgency about "doing it all" now, lest there be no functional tomorrow. Suddenly, I realize that I have beaten many odds and am in extraordinary shape. (Fifty is an excellent age to take up rollerblading, I'll attest.) Perhaps I can just do *some* things now and not presume that there are only a few gloomy, disabled days ahead.

I also recognize that the chronically ill can feel stigmatized, particularly if their illness was of childhood, teenage, or young-adult onset. Employers can be wary of hiring us, even if their wariness is illegal. Religious communities may have some reluctance about our entrance, since we can seem to be a high health risk. People we work with may expect that we will be missing frequently because of hospitalization. So that can mean, as it has for me, a kind of stubborn "showing up": One or two, and certainly no more than five, sick days a decade. Overtime. Yes to the extras.

But then we can get to the point of saying enough's enough and realize that there is no longer anything to prove to ourselves or to others. Maybe we haven't been serving Mammon, but we have been serving a few idols here and there—including the American idols of youthfulness, energy, and health, and the Protestant (and Catholic) work ethic, which acts as though we have never heard of grace.

EMBRACE GRACE

When I speak of feasting, of time out, of going lightly, I am speaking of giving over and giving in to grace. Non-sick days—in which we can drink in God's world, laze on its lawns, watch its waters and woods—can create in us a mighty comeback. Marvelously, too, they can even out and ease our disease. Prescription: more biblical days of lunching with deer and loving nature, even if it hasn't always been our sweetheart. As Thomas Aquinas said, "In all creatures there is found the trace of the Trinity." And even a trace can be healing—and pleasurable.

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Funerals Invite Evangelization

Reverend William B. Russ

In these days of declining numbers of priests and increasing responsibilities, we priests have to focus on those ministries that are most effective and properly our own. I would like to share the rationale and procedure for a pastoral practice that I have found to be an especially fruitful opportunity for pastoral evangelization. Focused time with families between the death of a loved one and the funeral is a small window that provides us with a marvelous opportunity that should not be squandered.

In my parish, I have found that in practically every family there are people who have been away from the church, sometimes for many years. The death of a relative or loved one causes us to be aware that most of our preoccupations are of passing value. The expression "God comes to us in the cracks of our lives" finds special significance at the time of the death of a family member or close friend. The family needs help to see the presence of God at these times. The pastor has an entrée into the family that he ought to utilize.

I presume that as priests we have responded as fully and as often as time and energy permit in order to be present for the dying person and his or her caretakers. Having thus demonstrated our care and concern, we will usually find the family open to our

suggestions regarding the funeral arrangements and the family's part in them.

I request that I be given the opportunity to meet with the extended family some evening between the death and the funeral. I reschedule other commitments to be available one of these evenings. Sometimes it is after the wake service. If there is no wake service, the evening prior to the funeral is an ideal time for the family to come together. Sometimes we even meet on an evening prior to the wake. What is important is that it is done between the time of death and the funeral.

I ask that as many members of the extended family as possible meet in one of the family member's homes. I especially insist that the children be present, as this is a very meaningful time for them. I facilitate a process, which I will describe below, of remembering and storytelling. Children learn best not when adults are talking to them but when they listen in on the conversations of their elders. They are less self-conscious if they sit on someone's lap or on the floor in a circle, surrounded by their elders. (Sitting space is usually at a premium at these gatherings.)

The children will hear stories that night that they may never hear at any other time. The ones that are repeated will send their own important message as to the significance of a retold event. Stories of the elders

about when the elders were young have a very therapeutic effect. The young people come to better appreciate that their elders too were young once. They too grew up imperfect in an imperfect environment. We all carry messages from parental figures deep in our psyches. When these messages were received, they seemed to be pronounced by all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful figures that had the power of life and death over us. Many times the messages were conveyed by a look rather than words. They seemed like decrees from God that must be followed and obeyed. Most of those messages were good and helpful; some can work real mischief if they go unexamined. One of the factors that reduce the potency of these messages is coming to terms with the fact that one's parental figures were ordinary mortals doing the best they could. Hearing specific real-life stories about these figures when they were young helps the younger members of the family to reassess the wisdom and importance of some of their early unexamined learning. It presents the elders as more human and lovable.

SETTING THE STAGE

I schedule a time with the family that avoids mealtime and eating, which would distract from the process. Using the obituary, I familiarize myself beforehand with the names and relationships of the family. If some close friends are present, I try to find out about their history with the family.

I position myself in a prominent place so that I am in the sight of all present. When it is determined that all have arrived, I ask for their attention so that I might say a few things to them. It is important that I have everyone's undivided attention. Often, people are still in the kitchen or bathroom, and it might be suggested that I start without them. I insist on waiting for them, as I want to establish that each person is important and needs to listen and be heard. Also, I want everyone to hear my opening remarks, in which I frame the focus and set the ground rules.

In my opening remarks, I talk for a short while about the importance of freedom, memory, and values. Freedom is what makes us human beings closest to the image of God. We have the capacity to choose, to make our own life to a considerable extent. These choices are served up by the events and circumstances of life, especially in the family. We discover who we are and what we might be from the lived experience of family. The family teaches real values—the kind that we live even if we don't talk all that much about them. They are encoded in the stories we tell and retell. I tell them that for the next hour or so, I would like them to share their experiences of growing and living with the deceased and each other.

The family teaches real values—the kind that we live even if we don't talk all that much about them—and they are encoded in the stories we tell and retell

I set this rule and ask everyone to abide by it: only one person may talk at a time (no side conversations or comments), and each person speaking may continue until he or she has finished. I tell them that I grew up in a big family and relate how difficult it was to finish any story or make any point without someone interrupting the conversation or changing its focus. Tonight, you get to tell the whole story!

Sadly, I have observed that good listening is rare within families. The rule for the session is that all listen to whoever is talking. I facilitate the process to ensure that the rules are observed. For example, if someone interjects something (which often happens) in agreement or disagreement, I invite the interrupter to finish the comment if it is short (which it usually is) but then redirect the attention of the group back to the original speaker.

QUESTIONS GUIDE REMEMBERING

I start with those who have known the deceased the longest. For the more elderly, this is usually a sibling. I begin by asking one of them directly and by name, What was it like growing up with (deceased's name)? Where did you live? Where did you sleep? What did you eat? What work were you required to do? How did you play? How did you pray? From this I get some sort of picture, and so do the younger family members, of what life was like for the deceased when young.

I want to hear about the work, play, struggles, and joys of the deceased person's early life. These need to be remembered, told, and honored. I want to hear about courtship, marriage, childbirth, and child-

At the funeral, the priest—like a good spiritual director—can lift up and identify the presence and power of God in the story of the deceased's life, thus helping the family to clarify important values

rearing. I want to hear from the children of the deceased about their memories of their parents and each other. Often, some fascinating material comes to light for the children in attendance when they hear their parents, uncles, and aunts talk about their young days together.

I ask to hear remembrances from the younger generation, wherein they tell how special were their experiences of the deceased. This usually leads to a period of story sharing across generational lines. Typically, there is more laughter than tears.

At the conclusion, I tell them how privileged I feel to share the sacredness of their family story. I will have heard many stories. I will have picked up on the values that are really important to this family. I can incorporate this wealth of material at the funeral

homily in the light of scripture. I will reflect back to the family what I have heard and what has touched me. The deceased is preaching this last sermon to us, and it is a message too valuable to go untold.

This process has very special fruits. At the funeral, the priest, like a good spiritual director, can lift up and identify the presence and power of God in all this living. This will help the family to clarify and hold more dearly the values that are important. The children hear what is really important in their family and why this is so in a way they never knew before.

Lastly, all those nonpracticing members of the family—members of other faiths and no faith—have had an experience of incarnational theology. The priest has been there for them. He has not preached at them; he has listened and been compassionate and caring about what is important to the family. They hear in the funeral homily about ways that the faith is so very relevant to daily life. Many return to the practice of the faith. Much good will has been engendered. I have found these to be some of the most rewarding ministerial hours of my priesthood.



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Emotional Healing

Sister Marie Beha, O.S.C., Ph.D.

Simple, everyday statements: "I have a headache." "I'm feeling really angry." "I'm so scared my knees are knocking." We accept their reality and go on with life. At least, we are able to do so most of the time. But then there are the more troublesome occasions when the headache, the anger, or the fear become disabling or interfere with what we need to do. We are laid up or crippled, or at least our ability to function is reduced more or less seriously. Then we realize that acceptance must be converted into concrete action. What are we going to do? As we begin to explore the possibilities, we are often brought face-to-face with the reality that our difficulty is lodged in that mysterious but all-encompassing area we label the psychosomatic. Our very real headache or backache may have its origin in yesterday's troublesome encounter with a difficult person or situation. Even if we can trace it back to something as specific as a fall, we recognize that our rate of recovery will be influenced by how we feel about our injury, and that our fears may be occasioned more by memories of the past than by present dangers. In short, human reality is a wild mix of body-soul interaction; our world is psychosomatic because we are.

While most of us are quite familiar with the psychosomatic aspects of our reality, we may not as readily recognize that we are biopsychospiritual

beings. Our spiritual life affects our health and healing, our wholeness and personal integration, and these in turn affect our spiritual growth and development. Though we have grown accustomed to realizing that our attitude toward illness will either hasten or retard our healing and that there are genetic components to much of our behavior, we are less likely to factor in the influence of grace. Similarly, while we profess the belief that our sharing in the divine life is redemptive, we may not expect baptismal grace to assist us in overcoming our obsessive behavior.

In this article I focus on the body-psyche interaction with spirit, concentrating on our emotions—those volatile elements that so clearly combine all aspects of our reality. It is my conviction, and the thesis of this article, that as we grow spiritually, we experience emotional development, and that this emotional maturation contributes in turn to our spiritual development.

ILLUSTRATING THE PRINCIPLE

Our emotions seem to span the whole gamut of biopsychospiritual responses, including the body responses we feel, as well as the meanings, we give to these bodily changes, along with that growth in grace

which Christian life so desires. When someone in a crowded elevator pokes me in the back, my body reacts as if to an "attack," until I hear the disarming "I am so sorry" of the little old lady behind me. Then understanding takes over; my body relaxes; I smile my acceptance and go on more ready to meet the next challenge of my day in a loving way. Over time, I may find that such a simple conversion enables me to be less defensive in all my responses, so I am not as inclined to interpret what befalls me in a belligerent fashion. I am more relaxed in general, healthier, better able to cope and to grow into the gentleheartedness of the beatitudes.

The process is so simple and so basic that we don't even notice it, until one day we observe that we are no longer as vulnerable to the disturbing encounters that formerly littered our days with emotional upsets. Gradually, we move in the direction of greater joy, peace, and patience—all the fruits of the spirit. We are growing in grace, into that "full stature in Christ" (Eph. 4:13) which is the potential of our baptism.

At least, this is the optimistic possibility of interaction on all these levels of being. But we are also aware that many of our reactions and responses have less happy outcomes. Even a slight disturbance can tense our bodies, adding to a critical spirit that spills over into our next encounter. Times for prayer and reflection are polluted by obsessing about how we felt when "he/she said. . . ." Each unfortunate encounter makes us more prone to subsequent disturbances until most of our relationships get buried under a pile of grievances. We can't forgive all that has been done to us; we don't even want to. What began with a small slight has hardened into a hostile attitude that clouds our ability to be open and trusting with other individuals—and with God.

The scenario is chillingly familiar. We all know persons whose angry responses have culminated in generalized hostility, and others who allow injustice, perceived or real, to pervert them into bitter individuals. Emotional retardation cripples them physically, psychologically, and spiritually.

Even short of such a steep downward spiral, who of us does not find ourself the subject of emotional disturbance? Way too much of our energy is wasted chasing the hot-air balloons raised by emotional overinvolvement. Runaway feelings cloud our thinking and impede our freedom to act. Our peace is too easily disturbed. The necessary conversion is a slow process, subject to unexpected reversals, but it ultimately offers a healing so deep that all our life is changed. Grace at work in us begins to bear the fruits of the Spirit: joy, peace, patience, kindness. The litany goes on and grows deeper.

HOW IT BEGINS

How does grace convert the emotions, enabling individuals to grow spiritually, to experience the freeing action of the Spirit accomplishing the work of personal redemption? The specifics of the process are as individual as fingerprints, but some general directions can be indicated. Knowing more of how spiritual growth and emotional maturity interact allows us to make better choices in the present and offers more realistic hope of future growth. With a clearer idea of the process, we are in a better position to cooperate with grace calling us into fuller and freer life.

Divinization, which is what growth in grace effects in us, makes us more like God, and so we live more fully in the Spirit of Truth that is God's Spirit. As this happens and to the degree that it happens, we are more in touch with reality, becoming more aware of the truth of what we are feeling and why.

This process of grace's healing action often begins with a growing clarity about how emotionally involved we are and what we are feeling. "Of course," you may say, "I know what I feel." My response, born out of much personal experience, is "Maybe." We may not even be aware of just how emotionally involved we really are. Who of us has not seen someone (perhaps ourself) protesting "I am not angry," while clenched jaw and rising color are clear giveaways to the contrary. We also often fail to recognize that our obsessive pattern of thinking is fueled by underlying emotions. Even when we admit the involvement, we may still not be able to name just what we are experiencing. Instead, we generalize: "I am upset" covers a whole range of complex emotions. On closer examination, "upset" may translate into "I resent your privileges" or "I am jealous of your success."

Grace offers us such insight in simple ways: a friend's warning look or another's careful critique. The look of hurt surprise on someone else's face may cause us to stop and reflect on what is happening in us. Even, and perhaps especially, our failures give us pause and invite reflection: How did I get into this mess in the first place?

Knowing better what we are feeling helps us distinguish between the powerful immediacy of our personal experience and the reality of the situation. We begin to suspect the accuracy of our perceptions when the whole world becomes overcast every time we feel depressed. If we find ourselves concluding everything is going from bad to worse; I am worthless; no one appreciates me; my work is no good; and nothing will ever change because that is the way it is, we can take measures to check on the truth of our perceptions. When an emotion as seemingly positive as "I am happy" becomes prescriptive, some-

thing we must always live up to, we learn to look deeper and allow our true feelings to surface.

Grace is at work countering the devil of our denial with the wisdom to wait for the emotional storm to pass, letting the weight of exaggeration bring down its carefully constructed house of cards. By focusing the spotlight of prayerful reflection on our emotional state, grace also sharpens our realization that what we feel appears to change the reality of others around us. My self-consciousness makes others uneasy; my feeling of anxiety may well be contributing its share to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Unless I know such truths, I cannot respond to the grace of emotional conversion, separating feelings from facts.

Knowing more of what we are feeling and its somewhat dubious connection with reality raises questions about the source of much of our emotionality. We discover in our everyday experiences that feelings date back to the bedrock of our earliest years, perhaps even to our first preconscious experiences of life and of relationships. Whether we are able to trust our own perceptions, for example, or look to others, especially authority figures, for confirmation, probably has its roots in the ways our parents or other caregivers either respected or discounted our feelings when we were too small to ask for what we needed. Whether we interpret our inevitable mistake making as normal or chastise ourselves as “hopeless” may be equally revealing of our past—and influential in our present. Customary patterns of emotional responses continue to shape the ways in which we perceive reality and express what we see. What one individual may term a challenge and respond to with renewed energy, another may experience as cause for anxiety and fear. For the former, being challenged means being trusted to grow; for the latter, it risks condemnation as a failure.

GRACE ASSISTS HEALING

Grace works to heal the effects of such early emotional wounding, first by helping us realize that much of our present response comes more out of our past than out of our present. Once we accept this truth, we are in a position to focus more on whatever has occasioned our immediate emotional response. By opening up reflective space within us, grace allows us not only to become more aware but also to make more appropriate choices in the present, allowing what we know to become redemptive.

Grace is incarnational and so must be realized in life if we are to allow the truth to set us free (John 8:32). The fear of failure that has kept us bound to safety must be risked; the challenge that in the past crippled us must be confronted and gone beyond.

The individual who still calls forth our learned prejudice must be embraced. That is what Francis of Assisi did with the leper. It is the healing that grace offers us.

As we live our way into greater truth, we also discover how we not only tend to identify ourselves with our emotional states but also project that meaning onto others. Perceiving ourselves as threatened, we look for attackers everywhere—and usually find them. Then we wonder why our aggressive response elicits more of the same.

This same spirit of truth helps us realize that emotions are only transitory events, psychosomatic responses modifying our experience. That is the sum of their hold on reality. At best, they are valid experiences for us in the here and now, not truths about what is really the case in the world around us. This grace provides a perspective that assists us in separating our feelings from reality and from the feelings of others.

Whenever we mistake our emotions for external reality, we heighten the risk of running into conflict with others who may have opposite experiences. I feel hot and throw open all the windows; you feel cold and close them. If each of us believes that what we experience describes the true state of things, we can only conclude that others are wrong, deceitful, or mistaken. The truth may well be that each of us interprets the same occurrence from a different point of view and consequently feels differently about it. Whatever interpretation each gives will seem correct from that person's perspective and, so it seems, must be defended vigorously—and argued about uselessly and endlessly.

While grace does not promise any magic solution to such conflict, it does help individuals grow in respect and understanding of each other's feelings and acceptance of their personal validity. One way in which this is accomplished is through the grace of a more secure self-identification. Just as the love of our parents makes us more accepting of ourselves, which in turn helps us reach out in positive response to others, so too does God's creative love open us to a greater sense of self-value and consequent acceptance of others. As we begin to believe that God takes delight in us just as we are right now, this grace makes us more tolerant of others—and tolerance brings peace.

Growth in the spirit of truth also helps us realize that we tend to overemphasize either the interpretation we give to our feelings or the feelings themselves. Some of us, for example, may get so stuck on a perceived meaning that we obsess over this idea or interpretation, reviewing what someone said or what we should have done over and over again. We may con-

tinue this circular pattern of thinking long after we have forgotten the incident that initiated the feeling, and thus we are left with nothing but the fantasy of our interpretation. Even though we may recognize that our repetitious thinking is getting us nowhere or is even destructive of our peace, we can't seem to stop it. As we keep circling around our perception, it becomes increasingly difficult to take effective action.

The opposite imbalance may find us so fixated on our feelings that we cannot bring our minds to bear on what those emotions mean or what we could or should do about them. We end up a bundle of confused emotion, spinning out of control; our "high" continues to crescendo until we crash into a despair that blankets everything. What began as a specific occasion becomes a state of being.

In both instances, emotional imbalance paralyzes; whether we are obsessive or hysterical matters less than our being fixated in unreality. The truth gets lost in an emotional pileup, and reason fails to break the logjam.

Grace invites us to move toward greater emotional balance. Having recognized the obsessive pattern of our thinking, we resolve to stop the fruitless repetition and change our focus. What we think about is less important than the energy with which we do it. Recalling a funny story may be more effective than trying to recite a vocal prayer whose fine phrasing doesn't touch our hearts. Similarly, a rush of uncontrolled feeling requires the counterbalance of time for quiet and restraint, calling for a strategic retreat. We leave the scene—sometimes by not saying anything until we are more composed, sometimes by changing the subject, sometimes by getting away physically. These are some skills that may help us cope.

But not always. We may find that full-blown obsession can't be stopped; hysteria can't be controlled; we are helpless. But we are not hopeless. This crisis can be transformed into an occasion of grace. God is gifting us, offering us help. Do we want to accept it?

Sometimes the honest answer is that we really don't. What attaches us to our misery? The answers are as diverse as our personalities. But all of us seem to get some sort of perverse satisfaction out of our obsessing, our emotional firestorm. Perhaps it is just the comfort of familiar habit, but I strongly suspect that something more may be involved. For many of us, it takes much less impetus to upset our peace than it does to quiet a nagging worry. Turning away from unproductive emotion demands more energy than simply refusing to become embroiled in the first place. This tendency of emotional disturbance to perpetuate itself even when it is clearly accomplishing nothing may just be another way of naming original sinfulness.

Grace counters our weakness by first enabling us to recognize our self-defeating behavior and then strengthening us to renounce it. Slowly, gradually, we come to learn that the sooner we do so, the easier it becomes to return to peace: putting out a lighted match is much easier than fighting a blaze. Resisting the downward spiral of negativity as soon as we recognize it is so energy-efficient that it becomes more and more our habitual choice.

ACCEPTANCE OF EMOTIONS

We will be helped in all of this if we can focus on the truth that emotions are neither good nor bad; they simply are. Unfortunately, most of us are conditioned to label our feelings, using value judgments that became embedded in our subconscious in early childhood. We may even have learned that all emotions are slightly suspect, or at least that certain emotional responses are "wrong"—a belief that may lurk behind our repression. At the same time, we label other emotional responses "good" and cultivate them, even when they are inappropriate to the present.

We tend to impose on others's responses the same labels we use to characterize our own emotions. We find it difficult to allow others to be sad, even when they have reason to be; we seem to expect that when we ask someone "How are you?" they will always answer "Great." We reward one set of emotional responses and penalize another, without regard to individual experience. Thus, children are often admonished "Don't be angry," or "Boys don't cry."

This tendency to make a moral issue of what we are feeling, with its consequent repression, risks depriving ourselves and others of the spice that a rich emotional life adds to personhood. We are left less human, less able to be people of the incarnation. As we enter more deeply into the emotional healing that grace offers, we grow less afraid to feel and to express our feelings. We are even encouraged to cultivate our sensitivity through good music, painting, or anything else that actualizes our personal responsiveness to reality.

Grace also enables us to become aware of ways in which we still fail to express adequately and appropriately what we are really feeling. We are always expressing something, even when we are unable to do so directly. Though we may say nothing, our body language conveys that something is wrong, leaving others to guess what and why. While unrestrained expression can be dangerous, provoking further escalation of emotional conflict, indirect expression can be even more difficult to deal with because it misleads both those who deny what they are feeling and their mystified observers. Personal responsibility gets lost in an emotional fog that blocks out the truth of experience.

Emotions that are denied create a buildup of pressure that eventually must be released. They may take a toll on health in a cluster of psychosomatic symptoms that sap strength and vitality. Or they may erupt in outbursts that come not so much from the immediate situation as from an accumulation of past provocations. When some inevitable expression comes, it is unexpected and often violent or destructive.

Grace works to counter these tendencies by enabling us to grow into greater truth and freedom. We experience less need to repress our emotions or to label them “good” or “bad.” Our feelings are acceptable just because we can accept them for what they are: our present response to a situation. Emotional self-acceptance leads to greater tolerance of others and the calm of serenity and peace.

SPIRIT AIDS DISCERNMENT

Once we are no longer so pushed and pulled by the immediacy of what we are feeling, we become more capable of discerning the Spirit by which we are being led. We get better at distinguishing between sheer emotionality and the powerful action of the Spirit at work in the depths of our being. When we feel attracted to something, to someone, we give ourselves time before taking action. If the attraction perdures through good days and bad, making a difference in how we feel about other realities or even changing our customary patterns of acting, we can suspect that something more is involved than emotionality. What began on the level of emotion now becomes an arrow pointing in the direction of the Spirit.

At other times what we experience is strong resistance. We don't want to even consider a particular course of action, multiplying excuses; we balk at the prospect of relating to a certain person, wanting nothing whatever to do with him or her. We protest—too much. Yet we seem unable to let the matter drop and go on. Again, we realize that something more is at work in our hearts than passing emotion. What is significant is not whether we are attracted or repelled but the fact that our response persists. Emotions come and go; the strong wind of the Spirit endures.

We then begin to suspect that both the attraction and the resistance are calls for response. Like a seed breaking through the hard earth, truth is surfacing beneath the cover of strong emotion. Grace teaches us to wait, in openness of spirit, for further breakthroughs, concentrating our energy on the willing acceptance of truth rather than spending our efforts on nervously trying to deny whatever we are feeling. Our emotions are revelatory, pointing toward the direction in which God's grace is moving us.

They also serve to make real for us how much we stand in need of God—how helpless we really are. We can't stop the strong flow of feeling that robs us of energy and peace; we can't lay aside our obsessive thinking patterns, no matter how much we deplore their enslaving quality. We need Another; ultimately, we need Another to free us. And grace is waiting to offer us this possibility, if and when we are ready to accept help.

Calling out “God, come to my assistance” has to be more than a magical invocation. It must be a sincere expression of our dependence on God, joined to a belief that Love is longing to save us. “Do you believe that I can do this for you?” (John 11:26) is the question our heart must answer out of the depths of our personal neediness.

Sometimes our answer, in all honesty, has to be, “I am not sure!” Perhaps we need further experience of our helplessness before we are ready to accept the assistance we say we want. Or we may need to bring specific emotional difficulties to prayer, asking for light on their source in our past and guidance regarding how to respond more effectively in the present. Then we may need to plead for the strength to begin changing our emotional scripting.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMOTIONALITY

Taking responsibility for what we are feeling is an indispensable first step. No matter what others said or did, failed to do, or failed to say, our current response is our own responsibility. We'd much rather not face that truth; blaming others has a long history dating all the way back to Eden. Even when we have been clearly wronged, we are still left with choices. Recrimination and bitterness will do us more harm than the original offense. The choice between such self-defeating reactions and more mature responses is ours to make.

Grace's invitation is always to choose life. We can begin to do so by refusing to repeat the emotional programs that nourish our negativity: the running commentary of self-justification, the imaginary acting out that would be so satisfying as well as so inappropriate. Some carefully chosen release of strong emotionality may, however, be advisable. Writing and then shredding the nasty note can allow us to vent our feelings without hurting anyone; the letter we write but never send may help us phrase a later, more care-filled response. But even these expressions should not be unduly prolonged, lest they tip our emotional balance into more negativity, adding fuel to our emotional fire.

Part of taking responsibility for our emotionality may also include gaining the added perspective of talking to someone else—a trusted friend, a spiritual

director, a superior, a councilor. But we must do so in a way that is respectful not only of the individuals who are the objects of our emotionality but also of those with whom we will be sharing. Friends of ours may not be the most dispassionate advisors; they may also have personal relationships with the others involved, which should not be jeopardized. The same caution applies to talking with authority figures, lest we damage a relationship that is always sacred ground. But with all this in mind, talking with another can be a first way of defusing what we are feeling. At times professional counseling may also be necessary; it can save a great deal of energy, freeing us for the works of the Kingdom.

EMOTIONS BECOME INTEGRATED

The goal of all this hard work is not just a healthier body or a more balanced psyche—though these are certainly desirable and are included in grace's liberating action—but a fuller realization of the potential of our baptism, putting on the "mind of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). To the degree that this happens, our emotions become better integrated into our life of faith. What we feel then coincides not only with the immediacy of the present situation but also with the reality that faith enables us to perceive. This expansion of our vision enables us to see how small is the incident that disturbs us, how transitory is its effect when viewed in the context of eternity. We are humbled when we realize that what angers us is more the affront to ourselves than the threat to the fuller coming of the Kingdom.

As grace becomes increasingly the life we live, we also become sensitized to the giftedness that surrounds us. We rejoice in all good things, not just those that are good for us. We enjoy the beauty that may be disguised in ordinariness. We find ourselves more loving and, as a consequence, everything and everyone seen through love's eyes becomes lovely. In sum, what we feel takes on the shape of reality seen from God's perspective.

Grace enlarges our emotional world, making us passionate people. And what we feel most deeply about are the needs and concerns of others. Injustice angers us; self-sacrifice thrills us. We acquire a taste for truth wherever it is found. We care more about justice than about personal safety.

No longer so consumed by emotional turmoil, we are freer than we have ever been in our life—freer to be about the great works of God. We no longer waste so much energy in emotional turmoil. Even on the physical level, we are more relaxed, rested, alert, and responsive. Our lives are more productive because we are fine-tuned to the activity of the Sanctifying Spirit.

Like Paul, we begin to realize "the life I live now is not my own; Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Consequently, our days take on the shape of the gospel. What we experience becomes similar to what Jesus experienced—not in the literal details of times and circumstances but in the larger outlines of purpose and motivation. What activates us is being about the Father's business. What delights us is "doing the Father's will" (John 5:30), so everything that happens brings us a gift. Since what "feeds" us is this same will (John 4:34), we are always well nourished. Baptismal grace, actualized in our life, turns us from self-centered emotional satisfaction to a focus on God and the things of God.

Our life begins to bear the fruits of the Spirit. Our charity reaches out to all, now that it is less hampered by self-centered emotional attraction or repulsion, so we become more effective in announcing the good news of freedom and healing. Our joy lasts, despite disappointments and discouragements. Because our peace endures deep down below surface disturbances, we can become peace makers.

These and the other fruits of grace are realized uniquely in each individual. In fact, grace makes us more completely, more emotionally ourselves. There is no job-lot holiness, no stereotypical way that saints feel. In creating us, God made us special individuals, and this becomes more evident as the process of growing in grace is better realized. Strong emotions are purified and so can be expressed without the stress and strain of carefully cultivated inhibitions. Emotional weaknesses endear just because they have been transformed into accepted vulnerabilities. Peculiarities that do not block God's work may also remain to encourage or sanctify the rest of us. If some sin continues to mar the perfection of our emotional expression, it is much less serious and less a pattern of behavior. When it occurs it is quickly acknowledged and repented, and the individual goes on ever deeper into the life of God.

In short, as what we believe becomes what we live, it also becomes what we feel. Then the emotional healing effected by grace brings us closer to glory.



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A Report from Germany

Martin Hofmeir, Ph.D.

It is known throughout the world that quite a lot of priests and religious are qualified as pastoral counselors and give therapy to people in need. But in Germany as well as in most other European countries, church and public haven't grown aware that there is a need for therapy for priests and religious themselves. As a consequence, little German literature on this topic exists. Whereas in Germany there are very few specialized therapeutic facilities for priests and religious, in North America there are several organizations that offer therapeutic care for clergy, either through outpatient consulting or residential treatment. This difference is due to a general delay in the development of pastoral psychology in Germany. In the field of pastoral psychology, America is miles ahead. Even now there is considerable resistance in Europe to becoming aware of the problems of priests and religious and accepting them as reality. Vowed people tend to be idealized and are regarded as if they are more like angels than human beings. And angels are not expected to have serious psychological problems.

Fortunately, this idealization has diminished since the publication of reports by Eugen Drewermann and other European pastoral therapists on their therapeutic experiences with clergy in recent years. Also, as the newspapers nowadays report on virtually every

case of priestly misconduct, there is a growing public awareness of celibate people and their problems.

RECOLLECTIO-HAUS

Only at the beginning of the nineties was the time ripe for the creation of residential treatment centers for priests and religious in Germany. One of the first of these was Recollectio-Haus, founded in 1991 by Wunibald Müller and Father Anselm Grün. Dr. Müller, the director of Recollectio-Haus, had been inspired by his visits to such North American centers as the House of Affirmation, Villa St. John Vianney, and Southdown. Therefore, the structure of the German house is similar to theirs. Recollectio-Haus is a therapeutic treatment center specializing in the care of priests and religious (monks and nuns) who suffer from such problems as depression, lack of self-esteem, burnout, spiritual crisis, and difficulty with celibacy or issue of sexuality. The house accommodates eighteen guests, who are treated in three-months courses. According to the holistic concept of the center, treatment consists not only of psychotherapy but also physical therapy and attention to spirituality. Because of negative experiences in Americans houses where spiritual matters had been neglected (see the critical remarks of Wilfred L. Pilette

as to the House of Affirmation, in *HUMAN DEVELOPMENT*, Fall 1991), Recollectio-Haus stresses the importance of spiritual development and guidance. This guidance is given by Father Anselm Grün and some other friars of the Benedictine Abbey of Mönsterschwarzach, where Recollectio-Haus is located. The house and its staff are financed by the Abbey, by several German dioceses, and by the guests.

Inspired by this prototype, and as a consequence of the great demand, similar houses have been set up in Germany and in Austria. To keep in touch with colleagues at the American facilities, Recollectio-Haus has joined the International Conference of Consulting and Residential Centers (ICCRC), which is based in North America.

NEED FOR AFTERCARE

I myself know Recollectio-Haus quite well, having worked there as a psychologist for two years. During that time, I realized more and more that there is a need for aftercare in the concept of Recollectio-Haus. This need results from the comparatively short length of stay. Within the three-month course of treatment, therapeutic processes and developments do take place, but it is evident that many guests need further therapy or another kind of aftercare. This realization is not a new one. Several American centers are engaged in aftercare and have developed polished aftercare programs. Some even employ specialized aftercare staff in separate institutions, such as the Anodos Center of Villa St. John Vianney and the Southdown Connection facility.

Based on North American aftercare experiences, I developed a questionnaire for the former guests of Recollectio-Haus, asking them about their individual aftercare practice and wishes. I also tried to find out how much the different components of the Recollectio course satisfy the needs of the guests. Although the questionnaire was fairly long (134 questions, 23 pages), the survey resulted in an extremely high response rate of 82.4 percent. Of the 165 persons who have visited Recollectio-Haus so far, 136 answered the survey. Female guests were the ones most eager to complete the questionnaire: 57 percent of the replies came from nuns, 29 percent from diocesan priests, and 10 percent from friars and regulars.

SATISFACTION WITH TREATMENT

One of the most striking findings was that almost all former guests of Recollectio-Haus were content with the therapeutic course in general. Nearly 70 percent even stated that they were very satisfied with their treatment. Responses indicated that the most

useful component was seen to be the individual psychotherapy, and the most important experience was feeling fully accepted and affirmed by the staff and the group. The atmosphere of empathic understanding and positive regard seems to be highly therapeutic, so that one might characterize Recollectio-Haus as a house of affirmation in the best sense. Affirmation is crucial, especially for many female guests. It seems to be the basic remedy for their main problems, which are lack of self-esteem and interpersonal conflicts. The most typical problems of male guests are difficulties with the celibate lifestyle and the question of whether to stay in or leave ministry or religious life. Of the 136 respondents, 18 (13 percent) stated that they did quit the clergy after the course.

Thanks to the holistic concept of Recollectio-Haus, aimed at the enhancement of body, mind, and soul, guests there experience a substantial degree of satisfaction with the spiritual guidance and physical therapy provided. Surprisingly, the study revealed that another important therapeutic factor was having time at one's disposal—time in which to pray, to be quiet, to think, to write, to relax. This reflects the fact that many guests had suffered from a chronic lack of personal time or had even burned out prior to therapy.

TRANSITION

In the opinion of many guests of Recollectio-Haus, preparation for the posttherapeutic time was not adequate. Some of them wished to have a period of free time between treatment and their return to work. They felt that they needed additional time on their own for repose and reflection. Older persons in particular (and many guests are in their fifties or older) perceive therapy as demanding and exhausting. Obviously, there is a need for a soft transition. Besides, it turned out to be very helpful to schedule a meeting with the superiors to clarify the individual form of a guest's aftercare before he or she left Recollectio-Haus.

BACK HOME

One major topic that is dealt with in a meeting with the superiors is whether the outgoing guest will go back to his or her former place or change to another parish or community. Several persons did change; indeed, others, as mentioned earlier, changed completely by quitting religious life. Only every second person returned to the place or community in which he or she lived and worked before therapy. The other guests had to find new homes and new communities or families.

Regardless of whether guests went back or changed to another place, they succeeded in many cases at communicating their experiences at Recollectio-Haus to at least a few people in their old or new communities. To be able to communicate to the outside world what one has experienced or learned in treatment is very helpful for reintegration.

PERSONAL CONTRACT

At Recollectio-Haus, as at some North American residential centers, each guest makes a personal commitment at the end of the course to continue and enhance the individual therapeutic process—for example, by maintaining a daily personal praying time and seeking regular spiritual guidance. Some former guests are very much aware of the contract's importance and have developed personal and creative ways to adhere to it; one nun put a paper listing her commitments into a self-made medallion hanging over her bed. On the other hand, a considerable number of questionnaire respondents indicated that their contracts did not play a significant role in their present life. They didn't make much of an effort to fulfill or even to remember those commitments.

FURTHER THERAPY AND GUIDANCE

In many cases, therapy did not end with the conclusion of treatment at Recollectio-Haus. Surprisingly, 40 percent of the former guests are still receiving psychotherapy (some of them in Münsterschwarzach), and about a third are receiving pastoral supervision. A majority of 57 percent receive spiritual guidance, many of them through their spiritual directors at the Benedictine abbey in Münsterschwarzach. In addition, respondents expressed a clear preference for engaging in the annual spiritual exercises at that same place. Thus, many past guests keep in touch with the abbey as well as with Recollectio-Haus, mostly by written correspondence with former counselors. Münsterschwarzach has become a second home to them.

Another way to keep in contact with the Benedictines of the abbey and the staff of the Recollectio-Haus is through annual week-long meetings of the members of past treatment groups in Münsterschwarzach. These gatherings are organized by the groups themselves. The staff of Recollectio-Haus are invited to take part, but the growing number of therapeutic courses and groups makes participation in all such meetings difficult. In addition to attending these group reunions, many guests communicate regularly with one or several group members. Obviously, some

of them have made good friends in Münsterschwarzach.

DEMAND FOR AFTERCARE

Questionnaire respondents who had taken part in annual meetings of their course group stated that they had benefited from those meetings but thought they would be even more effective if they were organized and run professionally—that is, by the director and staff of Recollectio-Haus. In order to refresh and deepen their personal therapeutic processes, many former guests of Recollectio-Haus said, they would like regular aftercare courses, or at least one aftercare meeting in the year following treatment. That aftercare course should be an integral part of the therapy, which consequently would consist of a basic three-month course and one or several aftercare courses (each lasting one or two weeks). This recommendation has been adopted by Recollectio-Haus. Since last year, guests attend an obligatory aftercare week (Monday to Friday) within one year of leaving Recollectio-Haus.

SUPERIORS AND COMMUNITY

From a systemic viewpoint, aftercare is most effective when the superiors and the community of each guest participate in it as well. As already mentioned, Recollectio-Haus offers the opportunity for the superiors to meet with a guest at the end of his or her course. Moreover, the superiors and interested pastoral therapists are invited to an annual meeting, through which they can become more aware of clerical problems, the processes of personal growth, and the role of community, superiors, and ecclesiastical structures. The meeting that was held last year, for example, dealt with the issue of celibacy.

On a larger scale, pastoral psychological workshops for former guests and members of their communities or for entire communities might be helpful. Some former guests have strongly recommended such workshops. They want to pursue their personal growth together with their fellow sisters or priests.



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The Dance of Leadership

Janet Malone, C.N.D., Ed.D.

Once upon a time, a congregation's chapter of elections was scheduled to be held in the mandated season. A chapter planning committee was set up, top facilitators for a chapter process were engaged, and in typical circular fashion, the group set out to reinvent the wheel of chapters. One survey after another was sent out to the congregation, inviting all to consider the qualities necessary for leadership. Meetings were held, distances traveled, faxes sent, phone calls made, walls newsprinted, and lists upon lists of leadership qualities dreamed up. Then the competencies of possible candidates for leadership were summarized, analyzed, databased, and submitted to the community for reflection.

Affirmations were sent out to people throughout the congregation: "I think you would make a good leader because you exhibit such and such leadership traits. And at this time, more than ever before, we need real leaders."

Discernment weekends were held, arms twisted, tried-and-true names whispered in the hallways. And the Holy Spirit was invoked so that people would be generous to let their names stand. Of course, in all sincerity, people did discern, "Am I called to be a leader in my congregation at this time?"

Then the days of chapter arrived. Great excitement and concomitant apprehension were evident. The

people whose names were still on the diminishing list of candidates got last-minute coaxing at the wine-and-cheese party the night before elections. "Leave your name on the list; you have what it takes. You would make a good leader. And we need good leaders at this time."

The solemn day of elections arrived. Lists of possible teams—the fruits of "upper room" sharing among the candidates—were presented to those assembled. Finally, chapter delegates breathed a collective sigh of relief: the elections were over for another several years.

Now the delegates could get back to their grassroots realities after this otherworldly experience. The newly elected leaders would be the ones responsible for managing the congregation in the maintenance tasks of administration—a far cry from the purported reason for their election: leadership.

And so they all lived in a babel of confusion until the next election, when the process for "leadership" would be repeated yet again.

A TOWER OF BABEL

What is leadership, anyway? We have all seen classifications of leaders: charismatic, position, administrative, natural, laissez-faire, democratic, "real," "born."

One problem with how we look at leadership is the confusion that arises from using the terms *leadership*, *management*, and *administration* synonymously. Think about the lived reality in many congregations today: at the time of provincial and general chapters of elections, we go through process after process of eliciting the gifts of “real” leaders, only to find that we are actually looking for administrators and managers instead.

Management, leadership, vision, maintenance, transformation, top-down, bottom-up, authoritarianism, power, authority, control. The babel list goes on and on—a list that we persist in applying to management, administration, and leadership.

The present leadership crisis in many congregations is in part due to the confusion that results from the perception that leadership, management, and administration are interchangeable. This is evident after elections in a congregation, when the newly elected group settles into the administrative and managerial tasks, even to the point of printing their letterhead with such designations as “General Administration” and “Provincial Administration.” The sense is that on the hierarchical flow-chart, the general council managers are at the top, and the provincial administrators are below them and answerable to them. Then come the local grass-root groups of members who are the energy of a congregation but feel that what happens at the other levels of the pyramid has nothing to do with their lived reality. It would appear that in our congregations, we model the management theory of our culture, all the while going through the motions of choosing leaders.

Writing recently in the *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), Allen Morrison observes that “Western management theory is based on a strong belief in hierarchical command and control systems, thorough competitive analysis and strategic audits, and short-term profit objectives.” If this is the reality, what are the subtle differences among management, administration, and leadership at both the conceptual and practical levels?

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Etymologically, *management* comes from the Latin *manus* (hand), indicating the day-to-day handling of a business. Denotatively—as Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard point out in *Management of Organizational Behavior*—management is the controlling or directing of an operation: producing, implementing, innovating, and integrating all aspects.

Managers go by many appellations: government officials, military officers, construction superinten-

dents, corporate executives, bank managers, treasurers of the corporation (to name but a few).

Administration is defined as the carrying out of tasks necessary for the management of a corporation or group. One could say that administrators carry out the dictates of management.

Because management and administration have many things in common, they are also often considered synonymous. Both focus on such things as physical plant maintenance, productivity, and finances. Blanchard and Johnson describe management as more results-oriented than people-oriented, even though people might be the recipients of the results. Administration is the carrying out of management tasks.

Since many organizations are built on a mechanistic and hierarchical model of governance, people at all levels are treated as machines; order, control, productivity, and the status quo are paramount. In *A Trainer's Guide to Andragogy*, John D. Ingalls writes that “a hierarchical organization creates a strong magnetic attraction toward the top as power becomes more and more concentrated, until it finally becomes ultimate in the one who occupies the single position at the pinnacle.”

Our religious formation has taught us to think in terms of hierarchies and pyramidal structures to the point of investing a select few people with extraordinary power—and that power is always in danger of being abused. As Thomas Moore notes in *Meditations*, “a religious or spiritual authority stands in a dangerous position, full of traps.”

In such a pyramidal system, tremendous psychic energy is expended to maintain the control and order perceived to be necessary. *Pyramid* literally means “fire in the middle”—and, as Ingalls points out, “energy in a pyramid moves naturally toward the middle.” Provincial administrators, who are the “middle managers” in many congregations, between the grass roots and the top echelon of management, may take heat from both the top and the bottom. Many cases of burnout for such administrators are rooted in that predicament.

People in these roles may not have learned to distinguish themselves from their roles. In the culture of religious life, as in many other cultures, you are what you do. Also, the cultural norms of seemingly having it all together and being on top of things have encouraged the assignment of responsibilities to solo players who may not go to a confidant or ally for help or feedback. A sense of purpose that is bigger than the ups and downs of managerial and administrative tasks is paramount. Unfortunately, many people in such roles have come to believe that “success” means always being available, never taking time

Leadership is the force within a congregation that ignites the spiritual and psychic energies of the members to follow their dreams for the reign of God

apart with definite boundaries, never finding a sanctuary.

In a hierarchical, pyramidal system of management and administration, abuse of power can lead to “power over,” manipulation, control, and rewards for keeping the status quo. The seduction of “power over” can intensify as one rises higher in the organization. People at the top may work to keep the power in the hands of a few. Unconsciously, or at times not, the old adage is enfolded: “We have looked outside for the enemy, only to find it lurking deep within, in ourselves.”

This is not to say that management and administration are not necessary to a group's life. Every organization needs faithful stewards of the group's physical plant, financial resources, investments, productivity, and records. Furthermore, initiative and expertise are clearly important in the management and administration of an organization. In attempting to differentiate leadership from administration and management, one might say that leaders have the vision to know what's best to do, while administrators and managers have the skills for doing it. The big question is, What is the “best to do” that we want our leaders to spend their energy on? And what is human energy, anyway?

ENERGY FOR ACTION

In many ways, human energy is mysterious to us. By and large, as Diarmuid O'Murchu observes in *Quantum Theology*, “we are out of tune with the creative energies that form and mold us, that sustain and engender our growth, that nurture and enliven our being.” In the past, many of us were perhaps more aware of our physical energy than of our psychic and

spiritual energy. In the agricultural and industrial eras, mere survival required a lot of physical energy. Today, in the information age—the quantum physics era—people have become more aware of their own psychic and spiritual energy, as well as the energy fields in a group, and are cognizant of those energies' interdependence. Some of our expressions show that both intuitively and explicitly, we are aware of each other's energy: “In that meeting, you could cut the air with a knife”; “When I am with her for any length of time, I feel like a dishrag afterward”; “He drains the life right out of me”; “I feel so enlivened when I spend time with you”; “I was so excited, I felt like I was going to burst”; “There is good synergy between us.”

The word *energy* comes from the Greek *en* (in) and *ergon* (work)—inherent power or capacity for action. The field of ergonomics concerns the relationship between the worker and his or her environment. At present, its focus is on promoting worker health, safety, and comfort in order to ensure good productivity. Efforts are needed to develop a branch of ergonomics specifically related to the psychic and spiritual energy in an organization.

Psychic and spiritual energy is about power, relationships, and healing. It is about cocreating our reality by using power as energy in life-giving ways. “What gives power its charge, positive or negative,” writes Margaret J. Wheatley in *Leadership and the New Science*, “is the quality of relationships.” In a quantum universe—where nonlocal causality, in its invisible yet real interconnectedness to the whole, affects the whole organization—our energy must be focused on both right-brain and left-brain efforts rather than solely on the latter.

Left-brain activities tend to involve order, control, certainty, answers, detailed planning, and analysis of problems and challenges. Right-brain activities—which tend to involve openness, feelings, intuition, creativity, questions, and the ability to handle ambiguity—facilitate life-giving relationships that will have quantum leaps of growth in what Wheatley calls “the continuous dance of energy . . . weaving here and there with ease and grace.” Roger Harrison, author of the essay “Leadership and Strategy for a New Age” (in *Transforming Work*, edited by John D. Adams), notes, “I have never in all my years as a consultant seen anyone change an organization in any fundamental way through rational planning . . . but by intuition, guided by strongly held intentions.” Both are needed and are interconnected; the problem is that the focus in many organizations has been solely on left-brain activities and Type A behaviors.

In a quantum world of energy, there are no road maps for exploring the interconnections in life and among people. The world is an organic whole com-

posed of many parts—which our mechanistic worldview can hardly understand because of their seeming chaos and lack of order.

Groups that are still structured hierarchically (despite having implemented sincere yet essentially cosmetic changes to be otherwise) would do well to note the last time leaders and membership engaged in dialogue about the energy (both positive and negative) in the group: its types, its sources, and the ways in which it is sustained, drained, or increased. If energy is the essential passion that drives what the members of a congregational group want in relationship with themselves, their neighbors, and their God, then in a quantum world of relationality, how is this enfleshed? And is this transformation a priority?

LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

Leadership is the force within a congregation that ignites the spiritual and psychic energies of the members to follow their dreams for the reign of God. Because it is contextual and interdependent, leadership does not occur without followership. Leadership involves the ability to intuit the group's vision and, in the words of Richard A. McCormick (*America*, July 20–27, 1996), “the capacity to influence the behavior of others toward some goal or objective.” Yet in order to affect others, leaders must have a strong and empowering relational base. They “cannot hope to influence any situation,” Wheatley writes, “without respect for the complex network of people who contribute to our organizations.”

Leadership thus entails an important nuance that differentiates it from administration and management. As Harrison explains, “The leader (as opposed to the manager) is seen as a source of vitality and vision, who can articulate values which organization members can live by.” In an article titled “Leadership for a New Century” (*Educational Management and Administration*, April 1997), Narothon Bhindi and Patrick Duignan state that concerns about excessive managerialism in many corporations have led to a call for the transformation of managers and administrators into leaders. The vision of the leader is truly focused on the present while reflecting the past and anticipating the future. Indeed, as Gerald L. Brown observes in his article on “The Call to Spiritual Leaders” (*Review for Religious*, January/February 1996), leadership is in essence a visioning in which leaders and followers together shape the future according to “the big picture” of what the group is all about.

Bhindi and Duignan highlight this focus on the big picture with a story about three stone cutters

who were asked about their work. The first one said he was paid to cut stones; the second said his job was to use special techniques to shape the stones; the third simply said, “I build cathedrals.” The leader's role as a source of vitality and vision for the group is all about building cathedrals. “Leaders,” Wheatley notes, “are being encouraged to include stakeholders, to evoke followership, to empower others.” Today, with our awareness of a quantum universe and of the paramount necessity of interconnectedness, interdependence, and relationships, leadership is no different. No longer is the hierarchical model relevant; it is counterproductive. People will only support something they have a stake in.

With its emphasis on relationships of mutual respect, the new leadership means dreaming dreams, encouraging others' dreams, and inviting the actualization of both the group and its members. “The dance of this universe extends to all the relationships we have,” Wheatley writes. “Knowing the steps ahead of time is not important; being willing to engage with the music and move freely onto the dance floor is what's key.” From this perspective, leadership is a challenge and an invitation to both leadership and followership. It is scary because it requires risk taking, yet exhilarating because it deals with the raw energy of potential.

We often hear people speak of “born” leaders. And how often have we newsprinted our meeting halls with lists of the characteristics of “real” leaders? I submit that leaders are not born but evolve, mature, and become transformed in a participative, interconnected way, in what quantum physicists call contextualism—defined by Wheatley as “a sensitivity to the interdependency between how things appear and the environment which causes them to appear.” And, of course, if leadership is always dependent on the context, “the context is established by the relationships we value.” As Hersey and Blanchard point out, leaders must in many ways be situational leaders, because the context and the followers involved determine what particular dance of leadership-followership will occur.

In a quantum world of relationships and interconnections, as Wheatley contends, “it is impossible to expect any plan or idea to be real if employees [followers] do not have the opportunity to personally interact with it. Therefore we cannot *talk* people into reality because there truly is no reality to describe if they haven't been there. It is the participation process that generates the reality to which they make their commitment.” That the hierarchical organization is doomed is evident in the minuscule impact that top-down dictums of solo players have on the grass roots in so many hierarchical congregations.

Leaders and followers influence each other so that the type of dance ultimately chosen, as well as the tempo and rhythm, come from both parties. It is in such openness of participation that the steps of the dance unfold; they are not preplanned but take their shape and form from the whole. "The dance takes on a new meaning now . . . of [our] being carried along by the rhythm and beat of the music," O'Murchu writes. "Pray, who is the dancer and who the dance? Often it is more a case of we being danced rather than we controlling our movements and moods."

Leadership and followership are both about influencing—each in different ways. The process of leadership-followership can be aborted if forced, pushed, or controlled. In its essence, leadership-followership is power shared. Anne Wilson Schaeff and Diane Fassel, authors of *The Addictive Organization*, focus on four moves used in this dance: Each dancer pays attention through vision, reaches meaning through communication, achieves trust, and organizes for innovative learning. As Bhindi and Duignan maintain, such leadership-followership is more like a cocreation that emphasizes partnership, empowerment, and an end to maternalism and paternalism.

In sum, management and administration are more concrete, tangible, maintenance-focused functions that often involve short-term planning, problem solving, and decision making geared to the day-to-day running of things. Leadership-followership and the corollary of influence are more ephemeral, more risky, because the focus is on change, chaos, and trying out the dreams and goals of the leader and followers in an organization. Yet in all three areas—management, administration, and leadership—the issue of power is a constant.

POWER BRINGS POSSIBILITY

In any analysis of the potential of power, it is important to recognize the negative connotations of power, reflected in such terms as *power-hungry*, *power-mongers*, *disempowered*, *powerless*, and *stealing power*. Among the many denotations of power are psychic or charismatic force, strength, vigor, authority, influence, physical force, and energy. Because of these connotations and denotations, many of us have mixed feelings about power and may even see it as evil.

Within a hierarchical society, of which most congregations are a microcosm, power is seen as a scarce commodity that diminishes if shared. From this perspective, power is seen as something to be held by a few who have "power over" people and treat them as objects to be manipulated and controlled. Indeed,

this sort of power is evil and seductive to the point of addiction. As O'Murchu describes it, "We are caught up in a spiral of power and powerlessness; the more we try to control, the more everything gets out of control." This sense of powerlessness perpetuates our ambivalent attitudes toward power in both ourselves and others.

Etymologically, power comes from the Latin *posse*, meaning possibility. So power is potential. In *Power: A New Social Analysis*, Bertrand Russell argues that power is akin to energy and, "like energy, must be regarded as continually passing from any one of its forms into any other." When power is shared by people who relate to and connect with each other as equals, its possibilities do not decrease but increase exponentially. This positive side of power is highlighted in such terms as *empowerment* and *self-empowered*. Russell describes the twofold nature of power as explicit in the leader and implicit in the follower. One aspect is as important as the other.

Power, then, is an energy that is actualized through relationships in interdependence. From a quantum perspective, it can exist only through relationships. Power is an essential ingredient in any organization or society, but because it is an energy, it needs to have space in which to flow, move, and be shared rather than to be confined and stultified in coercive ways. When power is shared, it becomes a positive energy; when hoarded, a negative one. According to Wheatley, "What gives power its charge, positive or negative, is the quality of relationships. Love . . . in organizations is the most potent source of power we have available."

AUTHORITY INVOLVES COMPASSION

Authority, while related to leadership, is different in some ways. When a person is chosen by a group to be its leader, by whatever process, the group gives the leader the right to speak and act in its name. Leadership is bestowed on the leader by the followers and, in its enfleshment, must be earned. The followers mandate leaders to invite them to dream dreams and to influence them regarding certain goals and objectives, both as individuals and as a group.

Authority invites the group into the dance of leadership-followership in such a way that "power with" is realized. As Fran Ferder and John Heagle write in *Partnership: Women and Men in Ministry*, "Authority is the creative capacity to call forth the vision and gifts of people; it is inviting rather than controlling, nurturing rather than constrictive." It is a delicate dance; if leadership, using its mandated authority, loses the rhythm of vision, invitation, and encouragement of the dreamers by getting caught up in the

arrhythmic beat of maintenance, administration, and management—or if the followers get seduced away from their partnership role in the dance by dependency on or negativism about leadership—then the dance can be sidelined or even completely aborted.

A November 1997 article in the *Prairie Messenger* (Muenster, Saskatchewan) reported that in the perception of many, “leadership is merely authority.” But as McCormick maintains in his *America* piece, “The more one relies on mere authority, the less one does those things that are essential to real leadership.” When one is invested with authority, the goal is to transform it into leadership-followership. It is a conversion process, because when one is in an authority position, the seductiveness of “power over” is a constant temptation. In the extreme, McCormick writes, “authoritarianism is authority that has ceased to struggle to become leadership.” Leadership is compassionate participation in the life-dance of the group, the ebb and flow of its joys and sorrows. “Compassion becomes the vital source of authority,” writes Mary Eileen Scott, author of *A Spirituality of Compassion*. “The real name of authority is compassion.”

LEARNING THROUGHOUT LIFE

Looking at the dance of leadership-followership as a process involves the biblical notion of emptying out (kenosis)—getting rid of old attitudes, perceptions, and values centered on a mechanistic, hierarchical, pyramidal model of leadership. With kenosis comes conversion (metanoia) and openness to a more adult, mutual, reciprocal, and cooperative model of leadership-followership. Understanding and living the principles and practice of andragogy are integral parts of kenosis and metanoia.

Learning and formation are lifelong processes that go well beyond the required study for professional degrees and certifications—and religious must continually pursue them in formal and informal ways. Knowledge and application of adult learning principles can help in this and are integral to any commitment in the dance of leadership-followership.

In their book *Learning in Adulthood*, Sharon B. Merriam and Rosemary S. Caffarella cite Malcolm Knowles’s definition of adult learning as andragogy, “the art and science of helping adults learn.” Andragogy is based on Knowles’s five assumptions that adult learners are self-directed, have a wealth of experience upon which to draw, learn within the context of their life tasks and roles, focus on the immediacy of their learning, and are internally motivated.

Andragogy is quite different from pedagogy, the art and science of teaching children. Brought up on

a diet of pedagogy as children and as adults, many in leadership positions unconsciously treat followers like children. There is a saying that we remember 20 percent of what we hear, 40 percent of what we see and hear, and 80 percent of what we experience. The essence of andragogy in leadership is providing the process and experience for adults to learn, remember, and understand.

One of the basic tenets of andragogy, explored by Jane Vella in *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*, is that “adult learning is best achieved in dialogue.” Because hierarchical structures are the fabric of many of our congregations, handed down from a medieval system of lords, manors, and serfs, it is critical to realize that, as Vella puts it, “ancient hierarchical relationships do not lend themselves to dialogue.” Through doing and understanding, adult learning principles, which are vital to leadership-followership, will gradually become our converted reality.

The basic andragogical principles involve needs assessment; the planning process; actual learning experiences, based on immediacy and practical application, and occurring in a learning environment that provides safety for the learner; awareness of and respect for the learner’s emotional needs; mutual respect between facilitator and learner in their different roles; and mutual responsibility of facilitator and learner (leader and follower) for the actual learning process and not solely for the acquisition of specific content.

Do these principles have anything to offer the dance of leadership-followership? Yes. They are summarized here because they can enhance personal and corporate reflection on what is integral to the dance as a partnership that requires constant learning and adjusting. The principles highlight learning as a lifelong process rather than as a specific outcome determined in a top-down manner. In the words of Michael Collins, author of *Adult Education as Vocation: A Critical Role for the Adult Educator*, it is “a dialectical process where the teacher is also a learner and the learner, in learning, teaches the teacher.”

MUSIC AND POWER

In order for (re)learning, experiencing, remembering, and change to occur, the adult model of leadership-followership necessitates dialogue in which information as power is shared in mutually accountable ways. In dance, music is a primary source of energy flow, fluidity, and movement. In our congregations, information that is mutually shared is the music of the group—the energy, the fluidity, and the movement. To quote Wheatley, “Information is an organization’s primary source of nourishment . . .

and its absence creates a strong vacuum. If information is not available, people make it up. Rumors proliferate; things get out of hand." The kenosis and metanoia involved in the dance toward information sharing as dialogue require true humility—what Vella describes as "a matter of the heart and the heart of the matter." And this humility is the essence of servant leadership-followership.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP RECIPROCAL

When Jesus responded to a power conflict among his disciples regarding who was the best, he said, "Let the greatest among you be as the youngest and the leader as the servant. . . . I am among you as the one who serves" (Luke 22:24–27). Jesus' leadership was servant leadership.

Yet the very notion of servant leadership is fraught with negative connotations, stemming in part from the etymology of the word *servant*, which comes from the Latin *servus*, meaning "slave." Jesus' life is an example of the essence of service that is respectful, caring, mutual, and reciprocal. The idea of "servant," however, suggests one who is less than or not as good as the "master." A servant is one who is hired from on high to do the dirty jobs. Jesus modeled servant leadership as a reciprocal servant leadership-followership based on equality, mutuality, and respect. Ellen Leonard, in her article on "Rethinking the Call to Serve" (*Canadian Religious Conference Bulletin*, Winter 1997), contends that today, in reappropriating servant leadership-followership, we must ask ourselves, "Can servant language be reclaimed so that it is not used in ways that are oppressive?" If language is a symbol system that bespeaks our reality, then how do we live servant leadership-followership in a way that is mutual, reciprocal, and empowering rather than hierarchical and oppressive? As Leonard points out, "It is not easy to remove servant language from the hierarchical power structures of society." How, then, do we develop alternative ecclesial and societal structures that ensure empowerment and "power with"? How can we reappropriate servant language so that it is not used in subtle ways to maintain an oppressive status quo? "The temptation to use Christian preaching and teaching to maintain power structures rather than challenge them is strong and deceptive," Leonard reminds us.

And so we come full circle to the question of power in relation to the dance of servant leadership-followership. Servant power is "power with," where energy is cocreated in mutuality and relatedness in our congregations. This is in contrast to "power over," which is manipulative and controlling but which insidiously poses as expert power that knows the answers with-

out even having asked the questions or listened to the responses.

In his book *Servant Leadership*, Robert K. Greenleaf notes that the crux of servant leadership-followership in congregations today is a reciprocity that empowers both leaders and followers in order to "make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served." Identifying these needs entails listening first rather than talking. Part of what may be needed is a term to replace *servant*—a word or phrase that describes Jesus' style of leadership-followership without any connotations of oppressed servitude.

It is in the ebb and flow of listening and dialogue that the dance of servant leadership-followership takes place. It is essential to create a sacred space for the dance of questioning—of asking the core, deeply meaningful questions that require kenosis, metanoia, and ultimately transformation. In order to meet the challenges of the dance of servant leadership-followership, those engaged in it must be reflective as well as active. As Ronald Heifetz observes in *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, for those always "engaged in the dance, it is nearly impossible to get a sense of the patterns made by everyone on the floor. Motion makes observation difficult."

Vella writes that "the ancient role of dominator, incompatible with this effort at dialogue, may sometimes be connoted by titles and rank. Whatever impedes that dialogue must be courageously addressed and eradicated." Indeed, the dance of servant leadership-followership in listening and dialogue necessitates coming home to finding the enemy within. As Moore notes, "religious leaders require unusual wisdom not to become intoxicated with power and lord it over their followers." In faith, hope, and love, the challenge is to make friends with the enemy and thus to enter into what O'Murchu calls "the great universal dance of being and becoming."

FEAR OF UNKNOWN

I have attempted to highlight the babel of confusion occurring in congregations because, in part, they have not delineated and differentiated the roles of management, administration, and leadership. Nowhere is this confusion more evident than in provincial and congregational chapters held for the express purpose of choosing new leaders.

The old adage that we get the leaders we deserve may be truer than ever. In his *Globe and Mail* piece, Morrison writes that "generally, people move into leadership positions when they demonstrate the competencies embraced by their national culture." The culture of religious life, in this in-between time, is at-

tempting to move to a new way of being and doing—but because this feels scary, restoration of the old hierarchical, top-down system lurks just outside the door. The present leadership crisis in many congregations is an offshoot of this lack of clarity, this confusion, this fear of the unknown.

Today, many prospective leaders will not let their names stand for leadership in their congregations, or they withdraw their names during the selection process as they watch the babel of confusion unfold. Some have shared with me their concerns about the lack of clarity regarding what leadership means in their congregations. Once they are elected to leadership, many if not most end up pouring their energies into management and administration rather than into leadership. This means that a great deal of their time is spent on maintenance rather than on transformation issues. These people are not downplaying the roles of management and administration; they are simply saying they don't feel called to these roles.

A CLEAR CHALLENGE

The challenge ahead—if congregations are serious about doing something about the present crisis in leadership—is to differentiate the roles of leadership, management, and administration. A first step would be to engage in a dance of information sharing, listening, and dialogue, with a focus on leadership-followership as distinguished from management and administration. This would entail looking at the dreams of the province and the congregation for the next mandated period so that congregation members could invite each other into the dance—some as leaders, others as followers, but all as servants for the reign of God.

When our congregations can separate leadership from management and administration, we can truly choose leaders when the time comes to do so. The

type of andragogical process we design for that selection will reflect our goals in choosing leaders who will lead us in the dance of servant leadership-followership. The ministry of management and administration, equally important in our congregations, will also reflect the principles of andragogy.

A final andragogical dictum is in order here: "Less is more." Separating out the different roles in congregations and choosing people specific to each role does not necessarily mean involving larger numbers of people in these ministries. The task before us is to be creative in dealing with this challenge in view of our present demographics.

RECOMMENDED READING

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BOOK REVIEW

Building Community: Christian, Caring, Vital by Loughlan Sofield, Rosine Hammett, and Carroll Juliano. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1998. 189 pages. \$11.95.

Creating a climate of trust is one of the most important tasks for any community. Trust is the framework on which *Building Community* has been developed. I look forward to incorporating the insights and processes suggested by the authors into my ministry of spiritual direction, retreat ministry, and facilitating a faith community of lay volunteers.

There has been a great deal of writing on life in community. What is helpful, what hinders community, and how to live within a faith community have been the subjects of many books and discussions. This work of Sofield, Hammett, and Juliano not only develops concepts of community living but also features practical and carefully developed exercises for working through community issues.

Those familiar with the authors' previous works will not be disappointed by this attempt to bring together theology and psychology to formulate strategies and exercises for group process. The emphasis is directed to community, with specific and practical recommendations for living a healthy and grace-filled community life. As human beings, we interact with one another constantly. Our community may be the family unit, the ministry team, a small faith community, or a religious community. Whoever the constituents of our community may be, we all desire that the community be healthy, vibrant, and caring. We need challenges both from within ourselves and from one another. *Building Community* is a well thought-out, practical, and professional contribution toward these ends.

In the foreword, Thomas A. Kleissler states that the volume "serves as a clear and thoughtful compass to help navigate small communities from somewhat uncomfortable or even tumultuous origins to ultimately fulfilling destinations." Straightforward and clear, it answers the need and desire of many who have requested

that a "workbook text" be made available for use with small communities.

The book is divided into two sections: "Dynamics of Community" and "Community Issues." Section 1 describes the developmental stages of community and explores the beliefs about community that directly affect its development. Section 2 deals with specific elements of group development, such as the importance of listening, understanding the roles of anger and forgiveness, building trust, the effects of transition and termination, intimacy, and communal decision making, as well as confrontation, conflict, and emotions.

The authors know their audience and use their backgrounds and insights from theology, group therapy, and psychology to provide a faithful guide for all who are striving for healthy and grace-filled interactions with others. Every chapter contains questions for reflection, suggestions for supplementary readings, and a practical process for facilitating discussion and growth. It is within the faith community that we hope to discover our truest and deepest selves. It is in our relationships within community that we either grow or become stagnant. As one experiences the breakdown of trust or becomes involved in conflict within the community, it is essential to know how to deal with such inevitable problems in a caring, Christian manner.

The authors challenge the reader to look at community and evaluate it in terms of its fulfillment of Christ's mission. Beginning with the call to community in the Old Testament and examining the leadership of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and Isaiah, they demonstrate that different moments in the life of a community require various styles of leadership. They move on to the call to community in the New Testament and challenge each Christian community to open discussion, discerning where the Spirit is leading them. We are drawn back to the basis for a healthy community: trust.

Sofield, Hammett, and Juliano have developed a sound and intuitive approach to community that is balanced and firmly established in scripture as well as in psychology. *Building Community* is an appropriate book for ministry personnel, those forming faith communities as part of their ministry, and religious communities of women and men who are open and willing to trust the Spirit as they examine their faith life together.

—Joanne Sullivan, S.H.C.J.